

discredited the United States as an honest broker between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, severely damaged prospects for peace, and endangered the security of America, Israel, and the Palestinian people.”

This legislation sends a clear message that any U.S. proposal to achieve a just and lasting solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict “should expressly endorse a two-state solution as its objective.”

Additionally, the resolution also makes clear that “Presidents of the United States from both political parties have opposed settlement expansion, moves toward unilateral annexation of territory, and efforts to achieve Palestinian statehood status outside the framework of negotiations with Israel.”

It reaffirms the Administration’s obligation to actively “discourage steps by either side that would put a peaceful end to the conflict further out of reach, including unilateral annexation of territory or efforts to achieve Palestinian statehood status outside the framework of negotiations with Israel.”

I don’t have to tell my colleagues that unilateral actions, such as annexation or unilateral declarations of statehood will not or cannot achieve the peace or security that is so urgently desired.

Additionally, I know that this legislation has been changed to remove references to occupation and to the settlement enterprise. Whether you agree or disagree with those changes, doing so does not and will not change the actual facts on the ground or the obstacles to peace that remain. And our debate should be based on recognizing those facts, however discouraging or contentious they may be. The Israeli’s and Palestinians deserve a debate that does so accurately.

The time for pushing for peace is always now.

But let’s be clear, the sentiment in this resolution is only a start. Acknowledging the need for two states is important but even more so is working to actually achieve it. And that is where work needs to happen.

What we need are bold steps forward. Not some half-baked peace plan that has taken nearly three years to develop, is apparently subject to the whims of the U.S. and Israeli election cycles, and has already been dismissed by key stakeholders in the region.

If the Administration refuses to do so, then its time that Congress consider what actions it can take to make the vision of the two-state that we so beautifully describe in this resolution into a reality. Because today, the reality on the ground is one state, continuing tensions, and cycles of violence that can easily escalate.

It’s no longer good enough to give lip service to two-states.

So I thank the leadership for bringing this to the floor and for welcoming this debate in the House.

And I know that the two-state solution has its critics who are just as frustrated as I am that both sides have seemingly never failed to miss an opportunity to let peace slip away. But the deadly status quo is no substitute. And wishful thinking for some other “alternative” option also is no substitute.

Achieving two-states was never going to be easy. Peace never is.

But ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is vital to the interests of our country, Israel, the Palestinians, and the broader region and inter-

national communities. This is why we continue to advocate for two-states despite the setbacks and spoilers.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. VEASEY). All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 741, the previous question is ordered on the resolution and on the preamble, as amended.

The question is on adoption of the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

□ 1030

#### VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT OF 2019

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 741, I call up the bill (H.R. 4) to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 741, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on the Judiciary, printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in part A of House Report 116–322, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

#### H.R. 4

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

*This Act may be cited as the “Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019”.*

#### SEC. 2. VIOLATIONS TRIGGERING AUTHORITY OF COURT TO RETAIN JURISDICTION.

(a) *TYPES OF VIOLATIONS.—Section 3(c) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10302(c)) is amended by striking “violations of the fourteenth or fifteenth amendment” and inserting “violations of the 14th or 15th Amendment, violations of this Act, or violations of any Federal law that prohibits discrimination in voting on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group.”*

(b) *CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3(a) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10302(a)) is amended by striking “violations of the fourteenth or fifteenth amendment” and inserting “violations of the 14th or 15th Amendment, violations of this Act, or violations of any Federal law that prohibits discrimination in voting on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group.”*

#### SEC. 3. CRITERIA FOR COVERAGE OF STATES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS.

(a) *DETERMINATION OF STATES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SUBJECT TO SECTION 4(a).—*

(1) *IN GENERAL.—Section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10303(b)) is amended to read as follows:*

“(b) *DETERMINATION OF STATES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SUBJECT TO REQUIREMENTS.—*

“(1) *EXISTENCE OF VOTING RIGHTS VIOLATIONS DURING PREVIOUS 25 YEARS.—*

“(A) *STATEWIDE APPLICATION.—Subsection (a) applies with respect to a State and all political subdivisions within the State during a calendar year if—*

“(i) *15 or more voting rights violations occurred in the State during the previous 25 calendar years; or*

“(ii) *10 or more voting rights violations occurred in the State during the previous 25 calendar years, at least one of which was committed by the State itself (as opposed to a political subdivision within the State).*

“(B) *APPLICATION TO SPECIFIC POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS.—Subsection (a) applies with respect to a political subdivision as a separate unit during a calendar year if 3 or more voting rights violations occurred in the subdivision during the previous 25 calendar years.*

“(2) *PERIOD OF APPLICATION.—*

“(A) *IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), if, pursuant to paragraph (1), subsection (a) applies with respect to a State or political subdivision during a calendar year, subsection (a) shall apply with respect to such State or political subdivision for the period—*

“(i) *that begins on January 1 of the year in which subsection (a) applies; and*

“(ii) *that ends on the date which is 10 years after the date described in clause (i).*

“(B) *NO FURTHER APPLICATION AFTER DECLARATORY JUDGMENT.—*

“(i) *STATES.—If a State obtains a declaratory judgment under subsection (a), and the judgment remains in effect, subsection (a) shall no longer apply to such State pursuant to paragraph (1)(A) unless, after the issuance of the declaratory judgment, paragraph (1)(A) applies to the State solely on the basis of voting rights violations occurring after the issuance of the declaratory judgment.*

“(ii) *POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS.—If a political subdivision obtains a declaratory judgment under subsection (a), and the judgment remains in effect, subsection (a) shall no longer apply to such political subdivision pursuant to paragraph (1), including pursuant to paragraph (1)(A) (relating to the statewide application of subsection (a)), unless, after the issuance of the declaratory judgment, paragraph (1)(B) applies to the political subdivision solely on the basis of voting rights violations occurring after the issuance of the declaratory judgment.*

“(3) *DETERMINATION OF VOTING RIGHTS VIOLATION.—For purposes of paragraph (1), a voting rights violation occurred in a State or political subdivision if any of the following applies:*

“(A) *FINAL JUDGMENT; VIOLATION OF THE 14TH OR 15TH AMENDMENT.—In a final judgment (which has not been reversed on appeal), any court of the United States has determined that a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group, in violation of the 14th or 15th Amendment, occurred anywhere within the State or subdivision.*

“(B) *FINAL JUDGMENT; VIOLATIONS OF THIS ACT.—In a final judgment (which has not been reversed on appeal), any court of the United States has determined that a voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting was imposed or applied or would have been imposed or applied anywhere within the State or subdivision in a manner that resulted or would have resulted in a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group, in violation of subsection (e) or (f), or section 2 or 203 of this Act.*

“(C) *FINAL JUDGMENT; DENIAL OF DECLARATORY JUDGMENT.—In a final judgment (which has not been reversed on appeal), any court of the United States has denied the request of the*

State or subdivision for a declaratory judgment under section 3(c) or section 5, and thereby prevented a voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting from being enforced anywhere within the State or subdivision.

“(D) OBJECTION BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.—The Attorney General has interposed an objection under section 3(c) or section 5 (and the objection has not been overturned by a final judgment of a court or withdrawn by the Attorney General), and thereby prevented a voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting from being enforced anywhere within the State or subdivision.

“(E) CONSENT DECREE, SETTLEMENT, OR OTHER AGREEMENT.—A consent decree, settlement, or other agreement was entered into, which resulted in the alteration or abandonment of a voting practice anywhere in the territory of such State that was challenged on the ground that the practice denied or abridged the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group in violation of subsection (e) or (f), or section 2 or 203 of this Act, or the 14th or 15th Amendment.

“(4) TIMING OF DETERMINATIONS.—

“(A) DETERMINATIONS OF VOTING RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.—As early as practicable during each calendar year, the Attorney General shall make the determinations required by this subsection, including updating the list of voting rights violations occurring in each State and political subdivision for the previous calendar year.

“(B) EFFECTIVE UPON PUBLICATION IN FEDERAL REGISTER.—A determination or certification of the Attorney General under this section or under section 8 or 13 shall be effective upon publication in the Federal Register.”

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 4(a) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10303(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), in the first sentence of the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking “any State with respect to which” and all that follows through “unless” and inserting “any State to which this subsection applies during a calendar year pursuant to determinations made under subsection (b), or in any political subdivision of such State (as such subdivision existed on the date such determinations were made with respect to such State), though such determinations were not made with respect to such subdivision as a separate unit, or in any political subdivision with respect to which this subsection applies during a calendar year pursuant to determinations made with respect to such subdivision as a separate unit under subsection (b), unless”;

(B) in paragraph (1) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking the second sentence;

(C) in paragraph (1)(A), by striking “(in the case of a State or subdivision seeking a declaratory judgment under the second sentence of this subsection)”;

(D) in paragraph (1)(B), by striking “(in the case of a State or subdivision seeking a declaratory judgment under the second sentence of this subsection)”;

(E) in paragraph (3), by striking “(in the case of a State or subdivision seeking a declaratory judgment under the second sentence of this subsection)”;

(F) in paragraph (5), by striking “(in the case of a State or subdivision which sought a declaratory judgment under the second sentence of this subsection)”;

(G) by striking paragraphs (7) and (8); and

(H) by redesignating paragraph (9) as paragraph (7).

(b) CLARIFICATION OF TREATMENT OF MEMBERS OF LANGUAGE MINORITY GROUPS.—Section 4(a)(1) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10303(a)(1)) is amended by striking “race or color,” and inserting “race, color, or in contravention of the guarantees of subsection (f)(2),”.

#### SEC. 4. DETERMINATION OF STATES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SUBJECT TO PRECLEARANCE FOR COVERED PRACTICES.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.) is further amended by inserting after section 4 the following:

#### “SEC. 4A. DETERMINATION OF STATES AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SUBJECT TO PRECLEARANCE FOR COVERED PRACTICES.

“(a) PRACTICE-BASED PRECLEARANCE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State and each political subdivision shall—

“(A) identify any newly enacted or adopted law, regulation, or policy that includes a voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or a standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting, that is a covered practice described in subsection (b); and

“(B) ensure that no such covered practice is implemented unless or until the State or political subdivision, as the case may be, complies with subsection (c).

“(2) DETERMINATIONS OF CHARACTERISTICS OF VOTING-AGE POPULATION.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—As early as practicable during each calendar year, the Attorney General, in consultation with the Director of the Bureau of the Census and the heads of other relevant offices of the government, shall make the determinations required by this section regarding voting-age populations and the characteristics of such populations, and shall publish a list of the States and political subdivisions to which a voting-age population characteristic described in subsection (b) applies.

“(B) PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER.—A determination or certification of the Attorney General under this paragraph shall be effective upon publication in the Federal Register.

“(b) COVERED PRACTICES.—To assure that the right of citizens of the United States to vote is not denied or abridged on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group as a result of the implementation of certain qualifications or prerequisites to voting, or standards, practices, or procedures with respect to voting newly adopted in a State or political subdivision, the following shall be covered practices subject to the requirements described in subsection (a):

“(1) CHANGES TO METHOD OF ELECTION.—Any change to the method of election—

“(A) to add seats elected at-large in a State or political subdivision where—

“(i) 2 or more racial groups or language minority groups each represent 20 percent or more of the political subdivision’s voting-age population; or

“(ii) a single language minority group represents 20 percent or more of the voting-age population on Indian lands located in whole or in part in the political subdivision; or

“(B) to convert one or more seats elected from a single-member district to one or more at-large seats or seats from a multi-member district in a State or political subdivision where—

“(i) 2 or more racial groups or language minority groups each represent 20 percent or more of the political subdivision’s voting-age population; or

“(ii) a single language minority group represents 20 percent or more of the voting-age population on Indian lands located in whole or in part in the political subdivision.

“(2) CHANGES TO JURISDICTION BOUNDARIES.—Any change or series of changes within a year to the boundaries of a jurisdiction that reduces by 3 or more percentage points the proportion of the jurisdiction’s voting-age population that is comprised of members of a single racial group or language minority group in a State or political subdivision where—

“(A) 2 or more racial groups or language minority groups each represent 20 percent or more of the political subdivision’s voting-age population; or

“(B) a single language minority group represents 20 percent or more of the voting-age population on Indian lands located in whole or in part in the political subdivision.

“(3) CHANGES THROUGH REDISTRICTING.—Any change to the boundaries of election districts in a State or political subdivision where any racial group or language minority group experiences a population increase, over the preceding decade (as calculated by the Bureau of the Census under the most recent decennial census), of at least—

“(A) 10,000; or

“(B) 20 percent of voting-age population of the State or political subdivision, as the case may be.

“(4) CHANGES IN DOCUMENTATION OR QUALIFICATIONS TO VOTE.—Any change to requirements for documentation or proof of identity to vote such that the requirements will exceed or be more stringent than the requirements for voting that are described in section 303(b) of the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (52 U.S.C. 21083(b)) or any change to the requirements for documentation or proof of identity to register to vote that will exceed or be more stringent than such requirements under State law on the day before the date of enactment of the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019.

“(5) CHANGES TO MULTILINGUAL VOTING MATERIALS.—Any change that reduces multilingual voting materials or alters the manner in which such materials are provided or distributed, where no similar reduction or alteration occurs in materials provided in English for such election.

“(6) CHANGES THAT REDUCE, CONSOLIDATE, OR RELOCATE VOTING LOCATIONS OR REDUCE VOTING OPPORTUNITIES.—Any change that reduces, consolidates, or relocates voting locations, including early, absentee, and election-day voting locations, or reduces days or hours of in person voting on any Sunday during a period occurring prior to the date of an election during which voters may cast ballots in such election—

“(A) in 1 or more census tracts wherein 2 or more language minority groups or racial groups each represent 20 percent or more of the voting-age population of the political subdivision; or

“(B) on Indian lands wherein at least 20 percent of the voting-age population belongs to a single language minority group.

(7) NEW LIST MAINTENANCE PROCESS.—Any change to the maintenance of voter registration lists that adds a new basis for removal from the list of active registered voters or that puts in place a new process for removing a name from the list of active registered voters—

“(A) in the case of a political subdivision imposing such change if—

“(i) 2 or more racial groups or language minority groups each represent 20 percent or more of the voting-age population of the political subdivision; or

“(ii) a single language minority group represents 20 percent or more of the voting-age population on Indian lands located in whole or in part in the political subdivision; or

“(B) in the case of a State imposing such change, if 2 or more racial groups or language minority groups each represent 20 percent of more of the voting-age population of—

“(i) the State; or

“(ii) a political subdivision in the State, except that the requirements under subsections (a) and (c) shall apply only with respect to each such political subdivision.

“(c) PRECLEARANCE.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Whenever a State or political subdivision with respect to which the requirements set forth in subsection (a) are in effect shall enact, adopt, or seek to implement any covered practice described under subsection (b), such State or subdivision may institute an action in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia for a declaratory judgment that such covered practice neither has the purpose nor will have the effect of denying or

abridging the right to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group, and unless and until the court enters such judgment such covered practice shall not be implemented. Notwithstanding the previous sentence, such covered practice may be implemented without such proceeding if the covered practice has been submitted by the chief legal officer or other appropriate official of such State or subdivision to the Attorney General and the Attorney General has not interposed an objection within 60 days after such submission, or upon good cause shown, to facilitate an expedited approval within 60 days after such submission, the Attorney General has affirmatively indicated that such objection will not be made. Neither an affirmative indication by the Attorney General that no objection will be made, nor the Attorney General's failure to object, nor a declaratory judgment entered under this section shall bar a subsequent action to enjoin implementation of such covered practice. In the event the Attorney General affirmatively indicates that no objection will be made within the 60-day period following receipt of a submission, the Attorney General may reserve the right to reexamine the submission if additional information comes to the Attorney General's attention during the remainder of the 60-day period which would otherwise require objection in accordance with this section. Any action under this section shall be heard and determined by a court of three judges in accordance with the provisions of section 2284 of title 28, United States Code, and any appeal shall lie to the Supreme Court.

“(2) DENYING OR ABRIDGING THE RIGHT TO VOTE.—Any covered practice described in subsection (b) that has the purpose of or will have the effect of diminishing the ability of any citizens of the United States on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group, to elect their preferred candidates of choice denies or abridges the right to vote within the meaning of paragraph (1) of this subsection.

“(3) PURPOSE DEFINED.—The term ‘purpose’ in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection shall include any discriminatory purpose.

“(4) PURPOSE OF PARAGRAPH (2).—The purpose of paragraph (2) of this subsection is to protect the ability of such citizens to elect their preferred candidates of choice.

“(d) ENFORCEMENT.—The Attorney General or any aggrieved citizen may file an action in a Federal district court to compel any State or political subdivision to satisfy the obligations set forth in this section. Such actions shall be heard and determined by a court of 3 judges under section 2284 of title 28, United States Code. In any such action, the court shall provide as a remedy that any voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting, that is the subject of the action under this subsection be enjoined unless the court determines that—

“(1) the voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting, is not a covered practice described in subsection (b); or

“(2) the State or political subdivision has complied with subsection (c) with respect to the covered practice at issue.

“(e) COUNTING OF RACIAL GROUPS AND LANGUAGE MINORITY GROUPS.—For purposes of this section, the calculation of the population of a racial group or a language minority group shall be carried out using the methodology in the guidance promulgated in the Federal Register on February 9, 2011 (76 Fed. Reg. 7470).

“(f) SPECIAL RULE.—For purposes of determinations under this section, any data provided by the Bureau of the Census, whether based on estimation from sample or actual enumeration, shall not be subject to challenge or review in any court.

“(g) MULTILINGUAL VOTING MATERIALS.—In this section, the term ‘multilingual voting materials’ means registration or voting notices,

forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials or information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, provided in the language or languages of one or more language minority groups.”

**SEC. 5. PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY TO ENFORCE THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT.**

(a) TRANSPARENCY.—  
 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 5 the following new section:

**“SEC. 6. TRANSPARENCY REGARDING CHANGES TO PROTECT VOTING RIGHTS.**

“(a) NOTICE OF ENACTED CHANGES.—  
 “(1) NOTICE OF CHANGES.—If a State or political subdivision makes any change in any prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting in any election for Federal office that will result in the prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure being different from that which was in effect as of 180 days before the date of the election for Federal office, the State or political subdivision shall provide reasonable public notice in such State or political subdivision and on the Internet, of a concise description of the change, including the difference between the changed prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure and the prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure which was previously in effect. The public notice described in this paragraph, in such State or political subdivision and on the Internet, shall be in a format that is reasonably convenient and accessible to voters with disabilities, including voters who have low vision or are blind.

“(2) DEADLINE FOR NOTICE.—A State or political subdivision shall provide the public notice required under paragraph (1) not later than 48 hours after making the change involved.

“(b) TRANSPARENCY REGARDING POLLING PLACE RESOURCES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—In order to identify any changes that may impact the right to vote of any person, prior to the 30th day before the date of an election for Federal office, each State or political subdivision with responsibility for allocating registered voters, voting machines, and official poll workers to particular precincts and polling places shall provide reasonable public notice in such State or political subdivision and on the Internet, of the information described in paragraph (2) for precincts and polling places within such State or political subdivision. The public notice described in this paragraph, in such State or political subdivision and on the Internet, shall be in a format that is reasonably convenient and accessible to voters with disabilities including voters who have low vision or are blind.

“(2) INFORMATION DESCRIBED.—The information described in this paragraph with respect to a precinct or polling place is each of the following:

“(A) The name or number.

“(B) In the case of a polling place, the location, including the street address, and whether such polling place is accessible to persons with disabilities.

“(C) The voting-age population of the area served by the precinct or polling place, broken down by demographic group if such breakdown is reasonably available to such State or political subdivision.

“(D) The number of registered voters assigned to the precinct or polling place, broken down by demographic group if such breakdown is reasonably available to such State or political subdivision.

“(E) The number of voting machines assigned, including the number of voting machines accessible to voters with disabilities, including voters who have low vision or are blind.

“(F) The number of official paid poll workers assigned.

“(G) The number of official volunteer poll workers assigned.

“(H) In the case of a polling place, the dates and hours of operation.

“(3) UPDATES IN INFORMATION REPORTED.—If a State or political subdivision makes any change in any of the information described in paragraph (2), the State or political subdivision shall provide reasonable public notice in such State or political subdivision and on the Internet, of the change in the information not later than 48 hours after the change occurs or, if the change occurs fewer than 48 hours before the date of the election for Federal office, as soon as practicable after the change occurs. The public notice described in this paragraph in such State or political subdivision and on the Internet shall be in a format that is reasonably convenient and accessible to voters with disabilities including voters who have low vision or are blind.

“(c) TRANSPARENCY OF CHANGES RELATING TO DEMOGRAPHICS AND ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.—

“(1) REQUIRING PUBLIC NOTICE OF CHANGES.—Not later than 10 days after making any change in the constituency that will participate in an election for Federal, State, or local office or the boundaries of a voting unit or electoral district in an election for Federal, State, or local office (including through redistricting, reapportionment, changing from at-large elections to district-based elections, or changing from district-based elections to at-large elections), a State or political subdivision shall provide reasonable public notice in such State or political subdivision and on the Internet, of the demographic and electoral data described in paragraph (3) for each of the geographic areas described in paragraph (2).

“(2) GEOGRAPHIC AREAS DESCRIBED.—The geographic areas described in this paragraph are as follows:

“(A) The State as a whole, if the change applies statewide, or the political subdivision as a whole, if the change applies across the entire political subdivision.

“(B) If the change includes a plan to replace or eliminate voting units or electoral districts, each voting unit or electoral district that will be replaced or eliminated.

“(C) If the change includes a plan to establish new voting units or electoral districts, each such new voting unit or electoral district.

“(3) DEMOGRAPHIC AND ELECTORAL DATA.—The demographic and electoral data described in this paragraph with respect to a geographic area described in paragraph (2) are each of the following:

“(A) The voting-age population, broken down by demographic group.

“(B) If it is reasonably available to the State or political subdivision involved, an estimate of the population of the area which consists of citizens of the United States who are 18 years of age or older, broken down by demographic group.

“(C) The number of registered voters, broken down by demographic group if such breakdown is reasonably available to the State or political subdivision involved.

“(D)(i) If the change applies to a State, the actual number of votes, or (if it is not reasonably practicable for the State to ascertain the actual number of votes) the estimated number of votes received by each candidate in each statewide election held during the 5-year period which ends on the date the change involved is made; and

“(ii) if the change applies to only one political subdivision, the actual number of votes, or (if it is not reasonably practicable for the political subdivision to ascertain the actual number of votes) in each subdivision-wide election held during the 5-year period which ends on the date the change involved is made.

“(4) VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE BY SMALLER JURISDICTIONS.—Compliance with this subsection shall be voluntary for a political subdivision of a State unless the subdivision is one of the following:

“(A) A county or parish.

“(B) A municipality with a population greater than 10,000, as determined by the Bureau of the Census under the most recent decennial census.

“(C) A school district with a population greater than 10,000, as determined by the Bureau of the Census under the most recent decennial census. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term ‘school district’ means the geographic area under the jurisdiction of a local educational agency (as defined in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).

“(d) RULES REGARDING FORMAT OF INFORMATION.—The Attorney General may issue rules specifying a reasonably convenient and accessible format that States and political subdivisions shall use to provide public notice of information under this section.

“(e) NO DENIAL OF RIGHT TO VOTE.—The right to vote of any person shall not be denied or abridged because the person failed to comply with any change made by a State or political subdivision to a voting qualification, standard, practice, or procedure if the State or political subdivision involved did not meet the applicable requirements of this section with respect to the change.

“(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

“(1) the term ‘demographic group’ means each group which section 2 protects from the denial or abridgement of the right to vote on account of race or color, or in contravention of the guarantees set forth in section 4(f)(2);

“(2) the term ‘election for Federal office’ means any general, special, primary, or runoff election held solely or in part for the purpose of electing any candidate for the office of President, Vice President, Presidential elector, Senator, Member of the House of Representatives, or Delegate or Resident Commissioner to the Congress; and

“(3) the term ‘persons with disabilities’, means individuals with a disability, as defined in section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.”

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3(a) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10302(a)) is amended by striking “in accordance with section 6”.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a)(1) shall apply with respect to changes which are made on or after the expiration of the 60-day period which begins on the date of the enactment of this Act.

#### SEC. 6. AUTHORITY TO ASSIGN OBSERVERS.

(a) CLARIFICATION OF AUTHORITY IN POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS SUBJECT TO PRECLEARANCE.—Section 8(a)(2)(B) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10305(a)(2)(B)) is amended to read as follows:

“(B) in the Attorney General’s judgment, the assignment of observers is otherwise necessary to enforce the guarantees of the 14th or 15th Amendment or any provision of this Act or any other Federal law protecting the right of citizens of the United States to vote; or”

(b) ASSIGNMENT OF OBSERVERS TO ENFORCE BILINGUAL ELECTION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 8(a) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10305(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking “or” at the end of paragraph (1);

(2) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

“(3) the Attorney General certifies with respect to a political subdivision that—

“(A) the Attorney General has received written meritorious complaints from residents, elected officials, or civic participation organizations that efforts to violate section 203 are likely to occur; or

“(B) in the Attorney General’s judgment, the assignment of observers is necessary to enforce the guarantees of section 203;” and

(3) by moving the margin for the continuation text following paragraph (3), as added by paragraph (2) of this subsection, two ems to the left.

#### SEC. 7. PRELIMINARY INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.

(a) CLARIFICATION OF SCOPE AND PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO SEEK RELIEF.—Section 12(d) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10308(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking “section 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, or subsection (b) of this section” and inserting “the 14th or 15th Amendment, this Act, or any Federal voting rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group”; and

(2) by striking “the Attorney General may institute for the United States, or in the name of the United States,” and inserting “the aggrieved person or (in the name of the United States) the Attorney General may institute”.

(b) GROUNDS FOR GRANTING RELIEF.—Section 12(d) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10308(d)) is amended—

(1) by striking “(d) Whenever any person” and inserting “(d)(1) Whenever any person”;

(2) by striking “(1) to permit” and inserting “(A) to permit”;

(3) by striking “(2) to count” and inserting “(B) to count”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

“(2)(A) In any action for preliminary relief described in this subsection, the court shall grant the relief if the court determines that the complainant has raised a serious question whether the challenged voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice, or procedure violates this Act or the Constitution and, on balance, the hardship imposed upon the defendant by the grant of the relief will be less than the hardship which would be imposed upon the plaintiff if the relief were not granted. In balancing the harms, the court shall give due weight to the fundamental right to cast an effective ballot.

“(B) In making its determination under this paragraph with respect to a change in any voting qualification, prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure with respect to voting, the court shall consider all relevant factors, if they are present:

“(i) Whether the qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure in effect prior to the change was adopted as a remedy for a Federal court judgment, consent decree, or admission regarding—

“(I) discrimination on the basis of race or color in violation of the 14th or 15th Amendment;

“(II) a violation of this Act; or

“(III) voting discrimination on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group in violation of any other Federal or State law.

“(ii) Whether the qualification, prerequisite, standard, practice, or procedure in effect prior to the change served as a ground for the dismissal or settlement of a claim alleging—

“(I) discrimination on the basis of race or color in violation of the 14th or 15th Amendment;

“(II) a violation of this Act; or

“(III) voting discrimination on the basis of race, color, or membership in a language minority group in violation of any other Federal or State law.

“(iii) Whether the change was adopted fewer than 180 days before the date of the election with respect to which the change is to take effect.

“(iv) Whether the defendant has failed to provide timely or complete notice of the adoption of the change as required by applicable Federal or State law.”

(c) GROUNDS FOR STAY OR INTERLOCUTORY APPEAL.—Section 12(d) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10308(d)) is further amended by adding at the end the following:

“(3) A jurisdiction’s inability to enforce its voting or election laws, regulations, policies, or redistricting plans, standing alone, shall not be deemed to constitute irreparable harm to the public interest or to the interests of a defendant in an action arising under the U.S. Constitution or any Federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or membership in a

language minority group in the voting process, for the purposes of determining whether a stay of a court’s order or an interlocutory appeal under section 1253 of title 28, United States Code, is warranted.”

#### SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.

Title I of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10301) is amended by adding at the end the following:

##### “SEC. 21. DEFINITIONS.

“In this Act:

“(1) INDIAN.—The term ‘Indian’ has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.

“(2) INDIAN LANDS.—The term ‘Indian lands’ means—

“(A) any Indian country of an Indian tribe, as such term is defined in section 1151 of title 18, United States Code;

“(B) any land in Alaska that is owned, pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, by an Indian tribe that is a Native village (as such term is defined in section 3 of such Act), or by a Village Corporation that is associated with the Indian tribe (as such term is defined in section 3 of such Act);

“(C) any land on which the seat of government of the Indian tribe is located; and

“(D) any land that is part or all of a tribal designated statistical area associated with the Indian tribe, or is part or all of an Alaska Native village statistical area associated with the tribe, as defined by the Bureau of the Census for the purposes of the most recent decennial census.

“(3) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term ‘Indian tribe’ or ‘tribe’ has the meaning given the term ‘Indian tribe’ in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act.

“(4) TRIBAL GOVERNMENT.—The term ‘Tribal Government’ means the recognized governing body of an Indian Tribe.

“(5) VOTING-AGE POPULATION.—The term ‘voting-age population’ means the numerical size of the population within a State, within a political subdivision, or within a political subdivision that contains Indian lands, as the case may be, that consists of persons age 18 or older, as calculated by the Bureau of the Census under the most recent decennial census.”

#### SEC. 9. ATTORNEYS’ FEES.

Section 14(c) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10310(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(4) The term ‘prevailing party’ means a party to an action that receives at least some of the benefit sought by such action, states a colorable claim, and can establish that the action was a significant cause of a change to the status quo.”

#### SEC. 10. OTHER TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.

(a) ACTIONS COVERED UNDER SECTION 3.—Section 3(c) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10302(c)) is amended—

(1) by striking “any proceeding instituted by the Attorney General or an aggrieved person under any statute to enforce” and inserting “any action under any statute in which a party (including the Attorney General) seeks to enforce”; and

(2) by striking “at the time the proceeding was commenced” and inserting “at the time the action was commenced”.

(b) CLARIFICATION OF TREATMENT OF MEMBERS OF LANGUAGE MINORITY GROUPS.—Section 4(f) of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10303(f)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking the second sentence; and

(2) by striking paragraphs (3) and (4).

(c) PERIOD DURING WHICH CHANGES IN VOTING PRACTICES ARE SUBJECT TO PRECLEARANCE UNDER SECTION 5.—Section 5 of such Act (52 U.S.C. 10304) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by striking “based upon determinations made under the first sentence of

section 4(b) are in effect” and inserting “are in effect during a calendar year”;

(2) in subsection (a), by striking “November 1, 1964” and all that follows through “November 1, 1972” and inserting “the applicable date of coverage”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(e) The term ‘applicable date of coverage’ means, with respect to a State or political subdivision—

“(1) June 25, 2013, if the most recent determination for such State or subdivision under section 4(b) was made on or before December 31, 2019; or

“(2) the date on which the most recent determination for such State or subdivision under section 4(b) was made, if such determination was made after December 31, 2019.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The bill, as amended, shall be debatable for 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on the Judiciary.

The gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 4.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 3 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019.

H.R. 4 is comprehensive and much-needed legislation to restore the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to its full vitality. This bill responds to the Supreme Court’s disastrous 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which effectively gutted the act’s most important enforcement mechanism, section 5, which requires jurisdictions with a history of racial discrimination in voting to obtain Justice Department or Federal court approval before any changes to their voting laws can take effect.

The Court struck down the coverage formula that determined which jurisdictions would be subject to preclearance, but it expressly said that Congress could draft another formula based on current conditions. That, among other things, is exactly what H.R. 4 does.

This bill is the result of an extensive process that included 18 hearings before three different House committees. This process developed a record demonstrating that States and localities and, in particular, those that were formerly subject to preclearance, have engaged in various voter suppression tactics, such as imposing burdensome proof of citizenship laws, polling place closures, purges of voter rolls, and significant scale-backs to early voting periods.

These kinds of voting restrictions have a disproportionate and negative

impact on racial and language minority voters and deprive them of a fundamental right guaranteed by the Constitution.

In short, the record is clear that substantial voter suppression exists across the country and that H.R. 4’s coverage formula is necessary to address this discrimination.

This legislation not only updates the existing formula to ensure that it accounts for current conditions, but it is also designed so that the formula will update itself regularly as conditions change, thereby directly responding to the Court’s concern in *Shelby County*.

Not surprisingly, the suspension of preclearance unleashed a deluge of voter suppression laws across the Nation, making restoration of this tool even more necessary.

As we consider the record and the need for H.R. 4, it is worth remembering why Congress enacted preclearance in the first place. Before the Voting Rights Act, we saw, essentially, a game of whack-a-mole in which States and localities could engage in voter suppression, secure in the knowledge that any discriminatory law that was struck down by a court could quickly be replaced by another. Preclearance successfully put an end to this game of whack-a-mole.

I want to thank TERRI SEWELL for crafting this important legislation and for her efforts over the last several years on this bill.

I also want to recognize the leadership of MARCIA FUDGE, chair of the House Administration’s Subcommittee on Elections, for her extraordinary work in conducting numerous field hearings examining voting problems around the country, as well as Constitution Subcommittee Chairman STEVE COHEN, who presided over many hearings in the Judiciary Committee to develop the substantial record on which this legislation is based.

The Voting Rights Act represents one of the Nation’s most important civil rights victories, one achieved by those who marched, struggled, and even died to secure the right to vote for all Americans. I urge my colleagues to honor their sacrifices and to enable section 5 once again to protect the rights of all Americans to vote.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN) control the remainder of the time on the majority side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, the right to vote is of paramount importance in a democracy, and its protection from discriminatory barriers has been grounded in Federal law since the Civil War and, more recently, in the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

A Supreme Court decision called *Shelby County* will be mentioned here many times today.

And, also, I want to say, it has been mentioned many times that the Supreme Court directed or instructed this body to do something. They did not. What they did say in the decision was that, if Congress wants to, they can revisit this. And, as we could on most anything, we are revisiting. But to say that we were directed to is a little bit of an overstatement and just needs to be clarified.

It is important to remember that this Supreme Court decision only struck down one outdated provision of the Voting Rights Act, namely, an outdated formula based on decades-old data that doesn’t hold true anymore, describing which jurisdictions had to get approval from the Department of Justice before their voting rules went into effect.

It is important to point out that other very important provisions of the Voting Rights Act remain in place and were not changed, including section 2 and section 3.

Section 2 applies nationwide and prohibits voting practices or procedures that discriminate on the basis of race, color, or the ability to speak English. Section 2 is enforced through Federal lawsuits, just like other Federal civil rights laws. The United States and civil rights organizations have brought many cases to enforce the guarantees of section 2 in court, and they may do so in the future.

Section 3 of the Voting Rights Act also remains in place. Section 3 authorizes Federal courts to impose preclearance requirements on States and political subdivisions that have enacted voting procedures that treat people differently based on race in violation of the 14th and 15th Amendments.

If a State or political subdivision is found by the Federal courts to have treated people differently based on race, then the court has discretion to retain supervisory jurisdiction and impose preclearance requirements on the State or political subdivision, as the court sees fit, until a future date, at the court’s discretion.

This means that such a State or political subdivision would have to submit all future voting rule changes for approval to either the court itself or the Department of Justice before such rule changes could go into effect.

As set out in the Code of Federal Regulations: “Under section 3(c) of the Voting Rights Act, a court, in voting rights litigation, can order as relief that a jurisdiction not subject to the preclearance requirement of section 5 preclear its voting changes by submitting them either to the court or to the Attorney General.”

Again, section 3’s procedures remain available today to those challenging voting rules as discriminatory. Just a couple of years ago, for example, U.S. District Court Judge Lee Rosenthal issued an opinion in a redistricting

case that required the city of Pasadena, Texas, to be monitored by the Justice Department because it had intentionally changed its city council districts to decrease Hispanic influence.

The city, which the court ruled has a “long history of discrimination against minorities,” was required to have their future voting rules changes precleared by the Department of Justice for the next 6 years, during which time the Federal judge “retains jurisdiction . . . to review before enforcement any change to the election map or plan that was in effect in Pasadena on December 1, 2013.”

A change to the city’s election plan can be enforced without review by the judge only if it is submitted to the U.S. Attorney General and the Department of Justice and has not objected within 60 days.

Voting rights are protected in this country, including in my own State of Georgia, where Latino and African American voter turnout has soared. Between 2014 and 2018, voter turnout increased by double digits, both for men and women in both of these communities, and we are committed to ensuring the ballot box is open to all eligible voters.

We are committed to ensuring constitutional means are used to accomplish that. We are committed to protecting the value of every American voice by securing our elections from fraud. These are our priorities and our principles.

Full protections are afforded under current Federal law for all those with valid claims of discrimination in voting. Unfortunately, the bill before us today would turn those Federal shields that protect voters into political weapons. This bill would essentially federalize State and local election laws when there is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that those States or localities engaged in any discriminatory behavior when it comes to voting.

The Supreme Court has made it clear that this type of Federal control over State and local elections is unconstitutional because Congress can only do that when there is proof of actual discrimination, which is what the bill is supposed to be about.

House Democrats continue their breakneck speed of everything else that we have going on, and now, today, a partisan bill comes to the floor to prevent States from running their own State and local elections when we are dealing with this very issue of impeachment and discussing elections at the same time.

When can we stop and ask: What is best for the United States? What is best for our voters?

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing H.R. 4, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advance-

ment Act of 2019. This critical civil rights bill, the result of strong leadership by my colleagues, Ms. TERRI SEWELL and Ms. MARCIA FUDGE, will restore the most important enforcement mechanism of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, its preclearance provision, by establishing a new coverage formula to determine which jurisdictions will be subject to preclearance.

The Supreme Court, when it struck down the previous preclearance requirement in 2013, asked Congress to come back with a new preclearance requirement. That is what we are doing.

This formula is self-updating because it requires a continuous, 25-year look back to determine whether, at any given moment, a jurisdiction has engaged in such pervasive discrimination so as to justify imposing a Federal preclearance requirement on any changes to voting laws that it may make.

This formula reflects the substantial evidentiary record developed in numerous hearings before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Civil Liberties, of which I am honored to serve as chair, and other committees of this House.

In short, it reflects current conditions and demonstrates the current need for preclearance. It is, therefore, responsive to the Supreme Court’s reasoning in *Shelby County v. Holder* that wrongfully, in my view, struck down the VRA’s previous coverage formula.

Maya Angelou told us: “When somebody shows you who they are, believe them. . . .” This is what the court does with the preclearance. When they show you that they are going to discriminate against people and try to make it harder for people to vote, believe them and make it more difficult and make them come on the front end and show what they are doing is right.

We have heard from my colleagues some of the egregious examples of continuing and perverse voter suppression efforts by States and localities since *Shelby County*, particularly those that used to be subject to preclearance under the old formula. These include poll closures and relocations, changes in district boundaries, voter purges, and barriers to voter registration that target racial and language minority voters.

I want to take this opportunity to respond to one of the main arguments my Republican colleagues have raised. We keep hearing from them that H.R. 4 would represent an unconstitutional Federal takeover of State and local elections.

Born in the South, I can tell you that this argument is old wine in a new bottle. It is what previous generations called “States’ rights,” a loaded term that was used by segregationists and, before them, by the defenders of slavery to justify a legal regime of white supremacy and racial ideology that said African Americans were, at best, second-class citizens and, at worst, less than human beings.

From slavery, to Jim Crow, to what we have today: States’ rights.

The Civil War and the 14th and 15th Amendments that followed settled the question that the other side raises by fundamentally reordering the relationship between Congress and the States, making it clear that Congress not only had the power, but the duty, to intervene against States when they engaged in racial discrimination to deny racial minorities the right to vote.

And States did it and did it and did it, and most of them were in the South, and most of them screamed, “States’ rights.”

Do not be fooled by the argument that H.R. 4 somehow exceeds our constitutional authority to address racial discrimination in voting. The other side will say that the Reconstruction Amendments prohibit only intentional discrimination and that, to the extent that H.R. 4 also addresses discriminatory effects of voter suppression tactics, we are not allowed to address those in this bill.

The Supreme Court, in *City of Rome v. U.S.*, made clear that our authority under the 15th Amendment allows us to do just that, and that is what we should do.

H.R. 4 represents exactly what the Reconstruction Amendments contemplated: Congress intervening against States in the face of overwhelming evidence of continuing racial discrimination in voting.

We must not shirk our constitutional duty. We must pass H.R. 4.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. FUDGE), who is an invaluable part of this work in the House Administration Committee and had a special committee to work on this. This is very close to her heart.

Ms. FUDGE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I remember well the day I stood here and raised my right hand and swore before God and country that I would support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic, and that I would bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

If you believe in the oath you took and they were not just empty words, you must vote to support H.R. 4.

If you believe that Black and Brown people, Asian citizens, Native Americans, language minorities, students, the poor, rural and urban citizens are part of “we, the people,” you must vote to support H.R. 4.

To quote our former colleague, the Honorable Barbara Jordan: “We, the people. . . . I was not included in that ‘We, the people.’ . . . But through the process of amendment, interpretation, and court decision, I . . . am finally . . . included in ‘We, the people.’”

She went on to say: “My faith in the Constitution is whole. It is complete. It

is total. I am not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the subversion, the destruction of the Constitution.”

The Constitution is the very foundation of our democracy. If your faith in the Constitution is whole, complete, and total, you must vote for H.R. 4.

Sadly, the United States has a long, dark history of denying or restricting the right of people to vote who look like me.

The Black Brigade of Cincinnati, the Buffalo Soldiers, the Tuskegee Airmen, they protected, fought, and many died for this country, but their ability to vote was either outlawed or suppressed.

□ 1045

JOHN LEWIS and Dr. King were attacked. Fannie Lou Hamer was brutally beaten, and Medgar Evers was shot down in his very own driveway.

We, the people.

The 14th Amendment says that: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States . . . , are citizens. . . . No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges . . . of citizens. . . .”

The 15th Amendment guarantees: “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

We are all we, the people.

The 24th Amendment prohibits the payment of poll and other taxes to vote. I believe that the purchase of unnecessary forms of identification and payment of fines and fees are just other forms of poll taxes.

And nowhere in the Constitution does it say, if you do not vote in one election, you lose your right to vote. Voting is a right; it is not a requirement. Your right to vote is not a use-it-or-lose-it situation. In my opinion, purging is a constitutional violation.

The same goes for closing polling places and moving them so far that it takes hours to travel there and back, or reducing early voting hours such that it discriminates against those who use those shortened hours.

I implore you not to place party over patriotism, wrong over right. I ask you to do the right thing. Our Nation needs to know if your faith in the Constitution is whole, if it is complete, and if it is total. And if it is, you will vote “yes” on H.R. 4.

How many more generations will be required to fight for their constitutional right to vote?

We are the greatest democracy in the history of the world against which all other democracies are judged. If your faith in the Constitution is whole, complete, and total, you must do the right thing, not the political thing.

Do the right thing. Vote “yes” on H.R. 4.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS), the Republican

leader on the House Administration Committee.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend, the ranking member of the Judiciary Committee, Mr. COLLINS, for yielding today.

Today, I rise in opposition of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019.

I fully support the bipartisan Voting Rights Act, which is still in place today. However, the bill we are debating today, H.R. 4, is not a reauthorization of the important, historically bipartisan Voting Rights Act that has helped to prevent discrimination at the ballot box since 1965.

It has only been since the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* that Democrats have decided to politicize the Voting Rights Act. This landmark decision left the vast majority of the Voting Rights Act in place today.

The only thing that was struck down from the VRA was the formula that was using 40-year-old data to determine which States were placed under the control of the Department of Justice, this process known as preclearance. The Supreme Court deemed this data and formula was no longer accurate nor relevant for our country’s current climate.

Chief Justice Roberts said: “The Voting Rights Act of 1965 employed extraordinary measures to address an extraordinary problem.”

He went on to say that: “Regardless of how to look at the record, no one can fairly say that it shows anything approaching the ‘pervasive,’ ‘flagrant,’ ‘widespread,’ and ‘rampant’ discrimination that faced” this “Congress,” this institution, “in 1965, and that clearly distinguished the covered jurisdictions from the rest of the Nation.”

So what does H.R. 4 do? It doubles down on federalizing elections and would attempt to put every State and jurisdiction in this country under preclearance.

The majority has been unable to determine the number of States or jurisdictions that would be covered by this preclearance if H.R. 4 were to become law. Apparently, we have to pass this bill before the American people would know if they would or would not be subjected to it.

The majority knows H.R. 4 is bad policy that will cripple thousands of local election officials across the country if it were ever to become law.

Let me be clear: H.R. 4 is not a Voting Rights Act reauthorization bill. H.R. 4 is about two things: placing the unnecessary preclearance requirements on to States, and the Democrats giving the Department of Justice control over all election activity.

My committee, the Committee on House Administration, has jurisdiction over Federal election policy, but it does not have jurisdiction over the Voting Rights Act. That goes to the Judiciary Committee. Despite that

lack of jurisdiction, our Subcommittee on Elections held seven field hearings and one listening session across this great country on the Voting Rights Act, encompassing eight different States and over 13,000 miles of air travel.

Even with this gargantuan effort to gather evidence to reinstate the struck-down formula from the VRA that we are discussing today, the Democrats were still unable to produce a single voter who wanted to vote and was unable to cast a ballot.

This isn’t a bad thing. It is a fantastic thing. It ought to be celebrated. We should be celebrating that Americans who wanted to vote were able to do that, and credit should be given to the Voting Rights Act for helping to achieve that.

The 2018 midterm election produced the highest voting turnout in four decades—and that is according to data from our Census Bureau—especially among minority voters.

The sections of the Voting Rights Act that are currently in effect are continuing to help safeguard the public from discrimination at the ballot box. Every eligible American who wants to vote in this country’s elections should be able to cast a ballot. That is why we have the Voting Rights Act, a great example, until today, of a bipartisan solution that is still working today to help Americans and protect from voter discrimination.

I have now seen four election-related bills from the majority come to this floor, and all of them have the same common theme: catchy titles and federalizing elections, a responsibility the Constitution gives to our States.

H.R. 4 is simply more of the same. It is a solution in search of a problem. That is why I cannot support this legislation.

I ask my colleagues to join me in making sure States maintain control of their elections.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Before I ask for unanimous consent so that the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) can take over the remainder of the time, I would just like to comment.

I have been in this Congress for 13 years now, and before these sections were added that the Republicans oppose, there was simply the Voting Rights Act with a new coverage formula, sponsored by Mr. SENSENBRENNER, and it had but less than 10 Republicans on it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), and I ask unanimous consent that he may control that time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL), the chief sponsor of this legislation.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Nothing is more fundamental to our democracy than the right to vote, and nothing is more precious to my district, Alabama's Seventh Congressional District, than the fight to protect the right to vote for all Americans.

It was in my district, Birmingham, Montgomery, Marion, and Selma, that ordinary Americans peacefully protested for the equal right to vote for African Americans.

Voting is personal to me, not just because I represent Alabama's Civil Rights District, but because it was on the streets of my hometown of Selma that foot soldiers shed their blood on the Edmund Pettus Bridge so that all Americans, regardless of race, could vote.

It was on that same bridge in Selma, Alabama, that our colleague, a then 26-year-old, JOHN LEWIS, was bludgeoned by State troopers with billy clubs in the name of justice. Their efforts led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the seminal and most effective legislation passed in this Congress to protect the right of all Americans to vote.

Those protections were gutted in 2013 by the Supreme Court decision in *Shelby v. Holder* when the Court ruled that Section 4(b) of the VRA was unconstitutional, stating that the coverage formula that Congress adopted was outdated.

Well, today, 6 years after the *Shelby* decision, Congress is finally answering the Supreme Court's call to action by passing H.R. 4. H.R. 4 creates a new coverage formula to determine which States will be subject to the VRA's preclearance requirement that is based on current, recent evidence of voter discrimination.

In addition, the bill also establishes practice-based preclearance authority and increases transparency by requiring reasonable notice for voter changes.

This new voter formula is narrowly tailored to cover the States and jurisdictions where there has been a resurgence of significant and pervasive discriminatory voting practices. It does not include those areas where such preclearance would be considered to be an unjustifiable burden.

In all, these changes will restore the full strength of the Voting Rights Act by stopping discrimination before it takes place, as Congress had intended in the pasting of the VRA.

Mr. Speaker, old battles have become new again. The fight that began in Selma, Alabama, in 1965 still persists. Yes, Selma is now.

While literacy tests and poll taxes no longer exist, certain States and local jurisdictions have passed laws that are modern-day barriers to voting. So as long as voter suppression exists, the need for the full protections of the VRA will be required, and that is why it is critically important that we fully

restore the protections of the Voting Rights Act by passing H.R. 4.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Judiciary Committee and the House Administration's Subcommittee on Elections for hosting the 17 hearings and collecting the thousands and thousands of pages of documentation supporting the report on H.R. 4.

Likewise, I include in the RECORD letters of support for H.R. 4 from outside groups that detail the existence of current voter suppression.

INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED  
AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL  
IMPLEMENT WORKERS  
OF AMERICA—UAW,

December 5, 2019.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the more than one million active and retired members of the International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW), I am writing to strongly urge you to vote 'YES' on the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4).

This legislation is badly needed as the disastrous Supreme Court's *Shelby v. Holder* decision has led to the proliferation of state laws that have made it more difficult for the American people to exercise their fundamental voting rights. In the last decade, 25 states have enacted new voting restrictions, including strict photo ID requirements, early voting cutbacks, and registration restrictions. Registered voters have been intentionally purged from voter rolls and states have closed hundreds of polling stations with a history of racial discrimination since the court ruled that they did not need federal approval to change their rules. These repeated attacks have severely undermined people's fundamental voting rights, which are the foundational principles of our representative democracy.

H.R. 4 helps protect citizens' ability to register to vote and provides real enforcement so that marginalized communities will have proper access to the ballot box. Empowering Americans to vote and ensuring that everyone has equal access to participate in the voting process is a core value of our democracy.

The UAW strongly urges you to vote 'YES' on the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4).

Sincerely,

JOSH NASSAR,  
Legislative Director.

NATIONAL HISPANIC  
LEADERSHIP AGENDA,

December 4, 2019.

Re NHLA Urges Support of the Voting Rights Advancement Act, H.R. 4.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: We write on behalf of the National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA), a coalition of the nation's leading Latino nonpartisan civil rights and advocacy organizations, to urge you to vote "yes" on the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019 (VRAA), H.R. 4. This legislation restores necessary voting protections to ensure that discriminatory voting-related changes are blocked before they are implemented. There is no right more fundamental to our democracy than the right to vote, and for more than 50 years the Voting Rights Act of 1965

(VRA) provided voters with one of the most effective mechanisms for protecting that right. The VRAA would provide Latino and other voters of color new and forward-looking protections against voter discrimination. The Latino community cannot wait

for another federal election cycle to go by without effective mechanisms to guard against discriminatory voting-related changes. NHLA will closely monitor this matter for inclusion in future NHLA scorecards evaluating Member support for the Latino community.

The VRA is regarded as one of the most important and effective pieces of civil rights legislation in our country's history due to its ability to protect voters of color from discriminatory voting practices before they occurred. In 2013, the Supreme Court, in its decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, struck down the formula that determined which states and political subdivisions were required to seek federal pre-approval of their voting-related changes to ensure they did not discriminate against minority voters. The Supreme Court put the onus on Congress to enact a new formula better tailored to current history, and after the decision, states or political subdivisions were no longer required to seek preclearance unless ordered by a federal court in the course of litigation.

H.R. 4 includes a new geographic coverage formula to identify those jurisdictions that will have to "preclear" their voting-related changes, as well as new provisions requiring practice-based preclearance, or "known-practices coverage." Known-practices coverage would focus administrative or judicial review narrowly on suspect practices that are most likely to be tainted by discriminatory intent or to have discriminatory effects, as demonstrated by a broad historical record. Any jurisdiction in the U.S. that is home to a racially, ethnically, and/or linguistically diverse population and that seeks to adopt a covered practice will be required to preclear the change before implementation. The known practices covered under the bill include: 1) changes in method of election to change a single-member district to an at-large seat or to add an at-large seat to a governing body; 2) certain redistricting plans where there is significant minority population growth in the previous decade; 3) annexations or deannexations that would significantly alter the composition of the jurisdiction's electorate; 4) certain identification and proof of citizenship requirements; 5) certain polling place closures and realignments; and 6) the withdrawal of multilingual materials and assistance not matched by the reduction of those services in English.

Preclearance is an efficient and effective form of alternative dispute resolution that prevents the implementation of voting-related changes that would deny voters of color a voice in our elections. Preclearance saves taxpayers in covered jurisdictions a considerable amount of money because the jurisdiction can obtain quick decisions without having to pay attorneys, expert witnesses, or prevailing plaintiff's fees and costs that are incurred in complex and expensive litigation. In December 2018, redistricting litigation in North Carolina had already cost \$5.6 million in taxpayer dollars. The litigation related to Texas's redistricting scheme was also a multi-million dollar affair, ultimately paid by taxpayers for the discriminatory actions of government officials.

Across the U.S., racial, ethnic, and language-minority communities are rapidly growing — the country's total population is projected to become majority-minority by 2044. It is no secret that many states and local jurisdictions fear losing political power, and the rapid growth of these communities is often seen as a threat to existing political establishments. Between 2007 and 2014, five of the ten U.S. counties with the most rapid rates of Latino population growth were in North Dakota or South Dakota, two states whose overall Latino populations still

account for less than ten percent of their residents, and are dwarfed by Latino communities in states like New Mexico, Texas, and California. It is precisely this rapid growth of different racial or ethnic populations that results in the perception that emerging communities of color are a threat to those in political power.

Last month, MALDEF, NALEO—both members of NHLA—and Asian Americans Advancing Justice—AAJC, released a new report, *Practice-Based Preclearance: Protecting Against Tactics Persistently Used to Silence Minority Communities' Votes*, detailing the need for forward-looking VRA legislation that provides protections for emerging minority populations. H.R. 4 identifies different voting changes most likely to discriminatorily affect access to the vote in diverse jurisdictions whose minority populations are attaining visibility and influence. The report looked at these identified practices and found, based on two separate analyses of voting discrimination, that these known practices occur with great frequency in the modern era.

Congress must protect the access to the polls, and it must include a known-practices coverage formula. H.R. 4 is a critical piece of legislation that will restore voter protections that were lost due to the Shelby County decision. NHLA urges you to stand with voters and to vote “yes” on H.R. 4.

Sincerely,

THOMAS A. SAENZ,  
MALDEF, *President  
and General Counsel,  
NHLA Chair,  
Civil Rights Committee,  
Co-Chair.*

JUAN CARTAGENA,  
LatinoJustice  
PRLDEF, *President  
and General Counsel,  
Civil Rights Committee NHLA,  
Co-Chair.*

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION,  
October 22, 2019.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,  
U.S. House,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the 3 million members of the National Education Association who work in 14,000 communities across the nation, thank you for holding this markup of the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019 (H.R. 4). We urge you to VOTE YES on the Voting Rights Advancement Act, which we believe combats voter discrimination and protects the most fundamental right in our democracy. Votes on this issue may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 116th Congress.

The U.S. Supreme Court in *Shelby v. Holder* invalidated a crucial provision in the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that prevented states with a history of discriminating against voters from changing their voting laws and practices without preclearance by federal officials. This federal review was an important feature of the Voting Rights Act; doing away with it has virtually annulled the federal oversight that was—and remains—crucial to ensuring that millions of people have equal access to the ballot box. After the 2013 *Shelby* decision, several states changed their voting practices in controversial ways that created barriers for people of color, low-income people, transgender people, college students, the elderly, and those with disabilities. The Voting Rights Advancement Act takes several steps toward reversing this harmful, undemocratic trend, including:

Modernizing the Voting Rights Act so that preclearance covers states and localities with a pattern of discrimination;

Requiring jurisdictions to publicly disclose, 180 days before an election, all voting changes; and

Authorizing the Attorney General, either on Election Day or during early voting, to send federal observers to any jurisdiction where there is a substantial risk of discrimination at the polls.

NEA members live, work, and vote in every precinct, county, and congressional district in the United States. They take their obligation to vote seriously because it is essential to protecting the opportunities that they believe all students should have. Furthermore, educators teach students that voting is a responsibility of citizenship, a privilege for which many people have fought and died. We urge you to VOTE yes on the Voting Rights Advancement Act, and to support legislation to expand voter registration, safeguard our elections, and restore voting rights for people with past criminal convictions—important steps to ensure that all have a voice in our society.

Sincerely,

MARC EGAN,  
*Director of Government Relations,  
National Education Association.*

IN OUR OWN VOICE: NATIONAL BLACK  
WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE  
AGENDA,

December 4, 2019.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda, a national/state partnership with eight Black Women's Reproductive Justice organizations (Black Women's Health Imperative, New Voices for Reproductive Justice, SisterLove, Inc., SisterReach, SPARK Reproductive Justice NOW!, Inc., The Afiya Center, and Women With A Vision), lifting up the voices of Black women leaders on local, state, and national policies that impact the lives of Black Women and girls, we write in strong support of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act. We oppose any Motion to Recommit. We urge you to vote “yes” during the anticipated House floor vote.

At the core of Reproductive Justice is the human right to control our bodies, our sexuality, our gender, our work, and our reproduction. That right can only be achieved when all women and girls (cis, femme, trans, agender, gender non-binary and gender non-conforming) have the complete economic, social, and political power and resources to make healthy decisions about our bodies, our families, and our communities in all areas of our lives. This most certainly includes at the polls.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision in June of 2013 that gutted the Voting Rights Act of 1965, one of the most impactful civil rights laws enacted to date, significantly set back racial equality in voting. Since the Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, discrimination has become common place in voting, nationwide, and voter suppression is absolutely rampant throughout the system. We know that such suppression disproportionately impacts communities of color.

Significant barriers exist for Black communities. In a nationwide poll conducted by In Our Own Voice, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, and National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum in Spring of 2019, 33% of women of color voters polled experienced an issue voting. Additionally, countless hearings held by the House Judiciary Committee throughout the year have shown significant barriers to accessing the polls, significantly impeding voter participation.

H.R. 4 is necessary to restore and modernize the Voting Rights Act to acknowledge the lived experiences of those working to ac-

cess the polls in all communities. This legislation would strengthen our voting laws to ensure repeated voting rights violations are addressed, increases processes and transparency around voting changes, and goes great lengths to protect individuals from racial discrimination in voting.

In Our Own Voice's work, particularly through our I Am A Voter project, is to increase Black women's voter engagement in state, local and federal elections, to ensure our stories are told and our voices are represented. H.R. 4 is critical to ensuring that we can express our beliefs and positions through the ballot box. We urge Congress to pass this historic legislation.

Sincerely,

MARCELA HOWELL,  
*Founder and President/CEO.*

AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION,

December 5, 2019.

Re Vote YES on H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) urges you to vote “YES” on H.R. 4 the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019 (VRAA) this morning. The ACLU will score this vote.

Congress enacted the Voting Rights Act in 1965 (VRA) almost a century after the adoption of the Fifteenth Amendment, which prohibits racial discrimination in voting. The most powerful enforcement tool in the Voting Rights Act was the federal preclearance process, established by Section 5. It required locations with the worst records of voting discrimination to federally “preclear”—or get federal approval for—voting changes by demonstrating to either the Justice Department or the D.C. federal court that the voting change would not have a discriminatory purpose or effect. What preclearance meant in practice was that states and jurisdictions with documented histories of voting discrimination could not enforce new voting rules without showing that the rules did not discriminate on the basis of race.

While upholding the Voting Rights Act's preclearance process itself, the Supreme Court's 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* effectively nullified preclearance protections contained in the Voting Rights Act by invalidating the coverage formula that identified which locations would be subject to preclearance. Many states have taken the *Shelby County* decision as a green light to enact discriminatory voting restrictions with impunity. These restrictions include photo ID laws, restraints on voter registration, voter purges, cuts to early voting, restrictions on the casting and counting of absentee and provisional ballots, documentary proof of citizenship requirements, polling place closures and consolidations, and criminalization of acts associated with registration or voting.

In turn, this rash of discriminatory voting laws has led to an explosion of litigation to protect voters from state and local violations of federal law. Since *Shelby County*, the ACLU has opened more than 60 new voting rights cases and investigations and currently has more than 30 active matters. Between the 2012 and 2016 presidential elections alone, the ACLU and our affiliates won 15 voting rights victories, protecting more than 5.6 million voters in 12 states that collectively are home to 161 members of the House of Representatives and wield 185 votes in the Electoral College. The ACLU also submitted a 227-page report to the House Judiciary Committee reviewing the legal landscape, evidence of ongoing voting discrimination addressed by the bill, and an analysis of its key provisions. The ACLU report is publicly available here: <https://www.aclu.org/report/aclu-report-voting-rights-act>.

The ACLU's recent litigation experience supports at least two conclusions: our record of success in blocking discriminatory voting changes—with an overall success rate in Voting Rights Act litigation of more than 80 percent—reveals that state and local officials are continuing to engage in a widespread pattern of unconstitutional racial discrimination and pervasive violations of federal law. It also shows that there is a lack of tools necessary to stop discriminatory changes to voting laws before they taint an election. Even in the cases in which the ACLU has ultimately succeeded, these discriminatory policies remained in place for months or even years while litigation proceeded—crucial time during which elections were held, and hundreds of government officials elected, under unfair conditions.

In delivering the Supreme Court's 5-4 majority opinion in *Shelby County*, Chief Justice John Roberts expressly invited Congress to update the Voting Rights Act's protections based on current conditions of discrimination. It is long past due for Congress to renew the protections of the Voting Rights Act. The price of inaction to protect the voting rights of Americans is high, and history offers a myriad of examples demonstrating its cost to the nation. Congress must act now to cement the legacy of the Voting Rights Act and guard the rights of all Americans. The ACLU urges you to vote "yes" on H.R. 4 and reauthorize the Voting Rights Act.

Sincerely,

RONALD NEWMAN,  
*National Political Director, National Political Advocacy Department.*

SONIA GILL,  
*Senior Counsel, National Political Advocacy Department.*

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE,  
*June 26, 2019.*

Hon. STEVE COHEN,  
*Chairman, House Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties.*

Hon. MIKE JOHNSON,  
*Ranking Member, House Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties.*

DEAR CHAIRMAN COHEN AND RANKING MEMBER JOHNSON: On behalf of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League), we write to urge the House Judiciary Committee to take prompt action to protect Americans' fundamental right to vote by approving H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019 (VRAA). We ask that this statement be included as part of the official hearing record for the subcommittee's June 25, 2019 hearing on "Continuing Challenges to the Voting Rights Act Since *Shelby County*."

Since the enactment of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) in 1965, a central part of ADL's mission—"to stop the defamation of the Jewish people, and to secure justice and fair treatment to all"—has been devoted to helping to ensure that all Americans have a voice in our democracy. Answering Dr. King's call for "religious leaders from all over the nation to join us . . . in our peaceful, nonviolent march for freedom," ADL lay leaders and staff joined more than 3,000 Americans in "peaceful demonstration against blind violence, in 'gigantic witness' to the constitutionally guaranteed right of all citizens to register and vote in 1965."

ADL continues to work today to ensure that all eligible Americans can exercise their fundamental right to vote through advocacy in the courts, legislatures, and communities.

We are proud to have stood with leaders such as Dr. King and Rep. John Lewis in 1965 to fight for every citizen's right to vote and we remain equally committed to this goal today. Recognizing the this landmark law as one of the most important and most effective pieces of civil rights legislation ever enacted, ADL has strongly supported the VRA and its extensions since its passage more than 50 years ago, including by filing a brief in *Shelby County v. Holder*.

In the years and decades following the enactment of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the law quickly demonstrated its essential value in ensuring rights and opportunities. Between 1964 and 1968—the presidential elections immediately before and after passage of the VRA respectively—African American voter turnout in the South jumped by seven percentage points. The year after passage of the VRA, Edward Brooke became the first African American in history elected to the United States Senate by popular vote, and the first African American to serve in the Senate since Reconstruction. By 1970, the number of African Americans elected to public office had increased fivefold. Today there are more than 10,000 African American elected officials at all levels of government.

To be sure, Section 2 of the VRA, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or membership in a language minority group in voting practices and procedures nationwide, has helped to secure many of these advances. Yet it is undeniable that Section 5 of the VRA, which requires certain states and political subdivisions with a history of discriminatory voting practices to provide notice and "pre-clear" any voting law changes with the federal government, played an essential and invaluable role in the VRA's success. Between 1982 and 2006, pursuant to Section 5, the Department of Justice (DOJ) blocked 700 proposed discriminatory voting laws, the majority of which were based on "calculated decisions to keep minority voters from fully participating in the political process." Proposed laws blocked by Section 5 included discriminatory redistricting plans, polling place relocations, biased annexations and de-annexations, and changing offices from elected to appointed positions, similar to many of the tactics used to disenfranchise minority voters before 1965. In addition, states and political subdivisions either altered or withdrew from consideration approximately 800 proposed voting changes between 1982 and 2006, indicating that Section 5's impact was much broader than the 700 blocked laws.

Despite decades of success and extensive documentation of the law's effectiveness in preventing discriminatory restrictions on the right to vote, on June 25, 2013 the U.S. Supreme Court, in a sharply divided 5-4 ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*, struck down Section 4(b) of the VRA. In doing so, the Court substituted its views for Congress's own very extensive hearings and findings conducted in 2006 when Congress almost unanimously voted to reauthorize the VRA for another 25 years. The ruling invalidated the formula used to determine which states and political subdivisions would be subject to preclearance under Section 5 but did not evaluate the merits of the preclearance provision itself. The majority only held that "the formula in that section can no longer be used as a basis for subjecting jurisdictions to preclearance."

While *Shelby County* has done irreparable damage to voting rights in the United States, Congress is not powerless to mitigate this damage and restore the original force of the VRA. In fact, the Court specifically noted that "Congress may draft another formula based on current conditions" and reinstate the preclearance provision in Section 5.

The Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019 introduces a new, rolling preclearance formula based on current need that would restore the preemptory force of the VRA. The recent onslaught of restrictive voting laws enacted across the country is evidence that litigation pursuant to Section 2 is entirely inadequate to prevent unconstitutional voting practices and discrimination. Since 2010, over 25 states have enacted restrictive voting laws. Half the country now faces stricter voting regulations than they did in 2010.

Perhaps the most illustrative case for the ongoing necessity of a preclearance process is the battle over a Texas voter ID law. In 2011, Texas passed S.B. 14, the strictest voter ID law ever enacted in the United States. Because Texas was required under Section 4 of the VRA to seek preclearance for its voting laws, the law was initially blocked from going into effect. The three-judge panel that reviewed the law found that "based on the record of evidence before us, it is virtually certain that these burdens will disproportionately affect racial minorities. Simply put, many Hispanics and African Americans who voted in the last election will, because of the burdens imposed by SB 14, likely be unable to vote."

Within hours of the Court's decision in *Shelby County*, Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott announced that S.B. 14 would go into effect immediately. Following the Attorney General's announcement, multiple civil rights groups and Texas voters filed suit under Section 2 of the VRA. In 2014, a district court held that "SB 14 was enacted with a racially discriminatory purpose, has a racially discriminatory effect, is a poll tax, and unconstitutionally burdens the right to vote." On appeal, a court of appeals stayed the district court's decision and allowed the law to take effect.

For more than two years and over the span of two election cycles, SB 14 prevented eligible voters from casting a ballot while litigation was ongoing. By the time the law was finally invalidated in 2016 by a 9-2 vote of the entire Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit (sitting en banc), no fewer than seven federal judges had concluded the law was discriminatory. Yet because Section 5 of the VRA was not in effect, this patently unconstitutional law was permitted to disenfranchise untold numbers of minority voters, over two election cycles. The consequences of disenfranchisement are not fully quantifiable but are certainly lasting. Elections cannot be undone, and no judicial relief can restore the confidence in our democracy that was unfairly taken from thousands of disenfranchised voters.

Texas is not the only state to adopt strict voter ID laws. The National Conference of State Legislatures identifies 10 states with "strict" voter ID laws and finds that 11% of all Americans lack the necessary government ID that these laws require. Voter ID laws have been found on multiple occasions to disproportionately affect marginalized communities, low-income and elderly Americans, and students.

Nor is Voter ID the only, tool states are using to disenfranchise voters for political gain. In Georgia, then Secretary of State Brian Kemp enforced new election code policies for the 2018 election (in which he was a candidate for Governor) which invalidated a voter's registration if there was any discrepancy in their registration paperwork. Of the 53,000 voters whose registration status was arbitrarily questioned, roughly 70% were African American. In Ohio, a "use it or lose it" law caused hundreds of thousands of voters to be purged from the 2018 voter rolls because they did not vote in the last presidential election. Gerrymandering, voter intimidation and harassment, cuts to early

voting opportunities, polling place manipulation and closure, and felony disenfranchisement efforts are just some of the other voter suppression tactics that have become prevalent since Shelby County and were used to disenfranchise voters in the 2018 election.

Indeed, we have seen the reversal of half a century of voting rights advancements since Shelby County. While Section 5 of the VRA surely could not have prevented all of these evils, there is no question that this country's democratic institutions would be stronger and our electoral processes more representative if the VRA were in full effect. Following this incredible damage done to the most fundamental of our rights as Americans, Congress now finds itself in the position to act.

The Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA) of 2019 is an important first step in restoring voter trust in America's elections and preventing states from enacting additional discriminatory measures to suppress the vote. Just over a decade ago, as Congress was debating the most recent reauthorization of the VRA, committees held 21 hearings and compiled over 20,000 pages of records as evidence of the success of Section 5, the prevalence of ongoing voting discrimination, and the constitutionality of the law. As a result, the reauthorization passed with overwhelming bipartisan support: 390 to 33 in the House of Representatives and 98-0 in the Senate. Congress now has both the power and the imperative to pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act and restore the critical voting protections that quite recently received overwhelming bipartisan approval.

In the face of federal inaction, many states have taken the lead on expanding and securing the right to vote for all people. In 2018, Maryland, New Jersey, and Washington adopted automatic voter registration, a policy which would significantly increase access to the ballot. Since 2016, six states have limited or reversed their felon disenfranchisement laws and 16 states have enacted reforms such as same-day registration, online voter-registration, and expanded early voting opportunities that make it easier to register and vote. Despite the absence of Congressional leadership, there is substantial momentum behind expanding ballot access and preserving America's voting rights.

S. 1945, the VRAA, creates a modern, flexible, rolling formula to determine which states and political subdivisions will have to pre-clear their laws with the federal government. The formula will not require preclearance in all the political subdivisions that have moved to restrict voting rights in the past six years, including some of the examples above, but, over time, the rolling formula will sweep in many of the most problematic jurisdictions. It will restore critical safeguards, preventing enactment of discriminatory voting laws by once more "shift[ing] the advantage of inertia and time from the perpetrators of the evil to the victims."

The Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution proclaims that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Section 2 of the Amendment expressly declares that "Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation." As the Supreme Court has recognized, "by adding this authorization, the Framers indicated that Congress was to be chiefly responsible for implementing the rights created in Section 1," and "Congress may use any rational means to effectuate the constitutional prohibition of racial discrimination in voting." Passage of the Voting Rights Advancement Act is not only rational. It is critical to enforcing the constitutional prohibition

on racial discrimination in voting and protecting the fundamental right to vote for all Americans.

We strongly welcome these hearings on the devastating legacy of Shelby County and appreciate the opportunity to present ADL's views. We urge the Committee to promptly approve the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019.

Sincerely,

EILEEN B. HERSHENOV,  
*Senior Vice President,  
Policy.*

STEVEN M. FREEMAN,  
*Vice President, Civil  
Rights.*

ERIKA L. MORITSUGU,  
*Vice President, Gov-  
ernment Relations,  
Advocacy, and Com-  
munity Engagement.*

MELISSA GARLICK,  
*Civil Rights National  
Counsel.*

—  
AFL-CIO,  
December 5, 2019.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I am writing to urge you to vote for the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R.4). This bill offers a flexible nationwide approach to protecting voters from discriminatory practices, and it is an important step toward restoration of the protections undermined by the Supreme Court's 2013 decision in Shelby County v Holder. We urge you to oppose any motion to recommit.

The bill would establish a new preclearance coverage formula that is responsive to the discriminatory practices that have proliferated since the Supreme Court's decision in Shelby County v. Holder. As Chief Justice Roberts himself said in the Shelby decision: "voting discrimination still exists; no one doubts that." Discriminatory policies have not only resurfaced in areas formerly covered by the Voting Rights Act's preclearance requirement, but also have proliferated nationwide. State and local officials brazenly have imposed restrictive voting requirements, altered district boundaries, and shifted polling locations in ways that make voting more difficult and less accessible for many voters. The Voting Rights Advancement Act would address these disenfranchisement strategies, as well as others certain to develop.

The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy, and the effort to protect citizens from voting discrimination has been bipartisan for more than half a century. Indeed, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 would not have passed without leadership from both political parties, and Republican presidents signed each Voting Rights Act reauthorization into law.

The integrity of our democracy depends on ensuring that every eligible voter can participate in the electoral process, and, thus, voting discrimination demands strong bipartisan legislative action. Every member of Congress should go on record today in support of this historic legislation.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM SAMUEL, *Director,  
Government Affairs Department.*

—  
BEND THE ARC: JEWISH ACTION,  
December 5, 2019.

Re Vote for the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4) and against any Motion to Recommit.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: As the Washington Director of Bend the Arc: Jewish Action, I urge you to vote for the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4) and to vote against any Motion to Recommit (MTR), when it

comes to a vote this week. This crucial legislation would restore and modernize the Voting Rights Act to combat voter suppression and discrimination across the country. As the largest national Jewish social justice organization focused exclusively on domestic policy, Bend the Arc and our members across the country care deeply about ensuring all people are able to exercise their Constitutional right to shape our democracy through voting.

The VRAA responds to the urgent need to undo the onslaught of abuses by state and local governments in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's 2013 decision in Shelby County v Holder, gutting the preclearance provision of the Voting Rights Act. Since that decision, 14 states have imposed new voting restrictions that would have likely been deemed unacceptable were the VRA at full strength. These policies have had real consequences, such as likely contributing to significantly lower turnout amongst targeted populations, including people of color, in both the 2016 presidential election and the 2018 midterms.

The fight to protect voting rights is deeply personal for American Jews. There is something quintessentially American, and also quintessentially Jewish, about voting. After all, voting is a ritual, part of belonging to the community. Additionally, the United States was the first federal government to fully enfranchise Jews. For many Jews, our families migrated to the U.S. fleeing persecution, coming here to find a country where, even if they were not always welcome or even fully protected under the law, they nonetheless had a legal right to exist, and be a part of our democratic system at the basic level.

Today, we draw inspiration not only from that part of the American Jewish experience, but also from the Jewish leaders of the recent past who worked to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and those today who participate in election protection efforts every Election Day. This is why Bend the Arc has helped mobilize the faith community in support of the VRAA and organized National Days of Action for voting rights to mark the 50th anniversary of the murder of Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Mickey Schwerner in 1964, and the passing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Again, I urge you to vote for the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4) and against any MTR, to ensure that all Americans are able to exercise their Constitutionally-protected right to vote.

Sincerely,

RABBI JASON KIMELMAN-BLOCK,  
*Washington Director,  
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action.*

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the many stakeholder groups that have worked so hard on this bill: the Leadership Council, the Legal Defense Fund, the NAACP, the Lawyers' Committee, the AFL-CIO, MALDEF, and so many more.

As we prepare to take this vote, let us be guided by our north star, that is our wonderful colleague, our beloved colleague, JOHN LEWIS, who reminds us each and every day that the price of freedom is not free. It has been bought and paid for by the courage of ordinary Americans who dared to make this Nation live up to its ideals of equality and justice for all.

Let us recommit ourselves to restoring the promise of voter equality and pass H.R. 4 today.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time remains on each side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 14¾ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Georgia has 20½ minutes remaining.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Judiciary Committee, having participated in the restoration and reinvigoration of the Voting Rights Act in the 2000–2008 period that was bipartisan because there was an understanding by President Bush that the denial of one's right to vote is a denial of human rights, I stand here today as a Member who has joined a number of the congressional hearings. I thank Congresswomen SEWELL and FUDGE and Congressmen COHEN and NADLER for the work that has been done, and I encourage my good friend, Mr. COLLINS, to be reminded of the voter suppression in his gubernatorial race that resulted in the loss of Stacey Abrams.

And so I rise today as one who has seen the impact of voting rights, particularly in the State of Texas, and argue vigorously for the restoration through H.R. 4. It is a fair bill: 25-year period on a rolling basis with current conditions, and a 10-year legitimacy for those that pass the test.

President Johnson, during the signing of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, said the vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men and women because they are different from other men and women.

I am a victim of voting rights suppression. I am a redistrict district that comes from the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Barbara Jordan would not have come to this House had it not been for the right to vote for someone that you choose.

In 1940, only 3 percent of African Americans living in the South were registered. Only after Barbara Jordan submitted an amendment did we include Hispanics.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman from Texas an additional 15 seconds.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Only in the period of the horrible Shelby vote did we have voter suppression with the voter ID law that impacted Hispanics in Texas severely, purging language that I helped put in this present bill and, of course, moving polling places.

If we believe in this document called the Constitution, then we believe in H.R. 4. We want it restored because it is the right of the people to vote.

Mr. Speaker, as a senior member of the Judiciary Committee and an original cosponsor, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 4, the

Voting Rights Advancement Act, which corrects the damage done in recent years to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and commits the national government to protecting the right of all Americans to vote free from discrimination and without injustices that previously prevented them from exercising this most fundamental right of citizenship.

I thank my colleague, Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL of Alabama for introducing this legislation, to Speaker PELOSI, Chairman NADLER, and the Democratic leadership for shepherding this bill to the floor, and to many colleagues and countless number of ordinary Americans who never stopped agitating and working to protect the precious right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, in response to the Supreme Court's invitation in *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 193 (2013), H.R. 4 provides a new coverage formula based on "current conditions" and creates a new coverage formula that hinges on a finding of repeated voting rights violations in the preceding 25 years.

It is significant that this 25-year period is measured on a rolling basis to keep up with "current conditions," so only states and political subdivisions that have a recent record of racial discrimination in voting are covered.

States and political subdivisions that qualify for preclearance will be covered for a period of 10 years, but if they have a clean record during that time period, they can be extracted from coverage.

H.R. 4 also establishes "practice-based preclearance," which would focus administrative or judicial review narrowly on suspect practices that are most likely to be tainted by discriminatory intent or to have discriminatory effects, as demonstrated by a broad historical record.

Under the bill, this process of reviewing changes in voting is limited to a set of specific practices, including such things as:

1. Changes to the methods of elections (to or from at-large elections) in areas that are racially, ethnically, or linguistically diverse.
2. Redistricting in areas that are racially, ethnically, or linguistically diverse.
3. Reducing, consolidating, or relocating polling in areas that are racially, ethnically, or linguistically diverse; and
4. Changes in documentation or requirements to vote or to register.

It is useful, Mr. Speaker, to recount how we arrived at this day.

Mr. Speaker, fifty-four years ago, in Selma, Alabama, hundreds of heroic souls risked their lives for freedom and to secure the right to vote for all Americans by their participation in marches for voting rights on "Bloody Sunday," "Turnaround Tuesday," or the final, completed march from Selma to Montgomery.

Those "foot soldiers" of Selma, brave and determined men and women, boys and girls, persons of all races and creeds, loved their country so much that they were willing to risk their lives to make it better, to bring it even closer to its founding ideals.

The foot soldiers marched because they believed that all persons have dignity and the right to equal treatment under the law, and in the making of the laws, which is the fundamental essence of the right to vote.

On that day, Sunday, March 7, 1965, more than 600 civil rights "demonstrators, including our beloved colleague, Congressman John Lewis of Georgia, were brutally attacked by state and local police at the Edmund Pettus

Bridge as they marched from Selma to Montgomery in support of the right to vote.

"Bloody Sunday" was a defining moment in American history because it crystallized for the nation the necessity of enacting a strong and effective federal law to protect the right to vote of every American.

No one who witnessed the violence and brutally suffered by the foot soldiers for justice who gathered at the Edmund Pettus Bridge will ever forget it; the images are deeply seared in the American memory and experience.

On August 6, 1965, in the Rotunda of the Capitol and in the presence of such luminaries as the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rev. Ralph Abernathy of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Roy Wilkins of the NAACP; Whitney Young of the National Urban League; James Foreman of the Congress of Racial Equality; A. Philip Randolph of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters; John Lewis of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee; Senators Robert Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey, and Everett Dirksen; President Johnson addressed the nation before signing the Voting Rights Act:

"The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison men because they are different from other men."

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was critical to preventing brazen voter discrimination violations that historically left millions of African Americans disenfranchised.

In 1940, for example, there were less than 30,000 African Americans registered to vote in Texas and only about 3 percent of African Americans living in the South were registered to vote.

Poll taxes, literacy tests, and threats of violence were the major causes of these racially discriminatory results.

After passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965, which prohibited these discriminatory practices, registration and electoral participation steadily increased to the point that by 2012, more than 1.2 million African Americans living in Texas were registered to vote.

In 1964, the year before the Voting Rights Act became law, there were approximately 300 African-Americans in public office, including just three in Congress.

Few, if any, African Americans held elective office anywhere in the South.

Because of the Voting Rights Act, in 2007 there were more than 9,100 black elected officials, including 46 members of Congress, the largest number ever.

Mr. Speaker, the Voting Rights Act opened the political process for many of the approximately 6,000 Hispanic public officials that have been elected and appointed nationwide, including more than 275 at the state or federal level, 32 of whom serve in Congress.

Native Americans, Asians and others who have historically encountered harsh barriers to full political participation also have benefited greatly.

The crown jewel of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is Section 5, which requires that states and localities with a chronic record of discrimination in voting practices secure federal approval before making any changes to voting processes.

Section 5 protects minority voting rights where voter discrimination has historically been the worst.

Between 1982 and 2006, Section 5 stopped more than 1,000 discriminatory voting changes in their tracks, including 107 discriminatory changes right here in Texas.

Passed in 1965 with the extraordinary leadership of President Lyndon Johnson, the greatest legislative genius of our lifetime, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was bringing dramatic change in many states across the South.

But in 1972, change was not coming fast enough or in many places in Texas.

In fact, Texas, which had never elected a woman to Congress or an African American to the Texas State Senate, was not covered by Section 5 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and the language minorities living in South Texas were not protected at all.

But thanks to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the tireless voter registration work performed in 1972 by Hillary Clinton in Texas, along with hundreds of others, including her future husband Bill, Barbara Jordan was elected to Congress, giving meaning to the promise of the Voting Rights Act that all citizens would at long last have the right to cast a vote for person of their community, from their community, for their community.

Mr. Speaker, it is a source of eternal pride to all of us in Houston that in pursuit of extending the full measure of citizenship to all Americans, in 1975 Congresswoman Barbara Jordan, who also represented this historic 18th Congressional District of Texas, introduced, and the Congress adopted, what are now Sections 4(f)(3) and 4(f)(4) of the Voting Rights Act, which extended the protections of Section 4(a) and Section 5 to language minorities.

During the floor debate on the 1975 reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act, Congresswoman Jordan explained why this reform was needed:

“There are Mexican-American people in the State of Texas who have been denied the right to vote; who have been impeded in their efforts to register and vote; who have not had encouragement from those election officials because they are brown people.

“So, the state of Texas, if we approve this measure, would be brought within the coverage of this Act for the first time.”

When it comes to extending and protecting the precious right vote, the Lone Star State—the home state of Lyndon Johnson and Barbara Jordan—can be the leading state in the Union, one that sets the example for the Nation.

But to realize that future, we must turn from and not return to the dark days of the past.

We must remain ever vigilant and oppose all schemes that will abridge or dilute the precious right to vote.

Madam Speaker, I am here today to remind the nation that need to pass this legislation is urgent because the right to vote—that “powerful—instrument that can break down the walls of injustice”—faces grave threats.

The threat stems from the decision issued in June 2013 by the Supreme Court in *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 193 (2013), which invalidated Section 4(b) of the VRA, and paralyzed the application of the VRA’s Section 5 preclearance requirements.

According to the Supreme Court majority, the reason for striking down Section 4(b) was that “times change.”

Now, the Court was right; times have changed.

But what the Court did not fully appreciate is that the positive changes it cited are due almost entirely to the existence and vigorous enforcement of the Voting Rights Act.

And that is why the Voting Rights Act is still needed and that is why we must pass H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Let me put it this way: in the same way that the vaccine invented by Dr. Jonas Salk in 1953 eradicated the crippling effects but did not eliminate the cause of polio, the Voting Rights Act succeeded in stymieing the practices that resulted in the wholesale disenfranchisement of African Americans and language minorities but did eliminate them entirely.

The Voting Rights Act is needed as much today to prevent another epidemic of voting disenfranchisement as Dr. Salk’s vaccine is still needed to prevent another polio epidemic.

As Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg stated in *Shelby County v. Holder*, “[t]hrowing out preclearance when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory changes is like throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet.”

However, officials in some states, notably Texas and North Carolina, seemed to regard the *Shelby* decision as a green light and rushed to implement election laws, policies, and practices that could never pass muster under the Section 5 preclearance regime.

My constituents remember very well the Voter ID law passed in Texas in 2011, which required every registered voter to present a valid government-issued photo ID on the day of polling in order to vote.

The Justice Department blocked the law in March of 2012, and it was Section 5 that prohibited it from going into effect.

At least it did until the *Shelby* decision, because on the very same day that *Shelby* was decided officials in Texas announced they would immediately implement the Photo ID law, and other election laws, policies, and practices that could never pass muster under the Section 5 preclearance regime.

The Texas Photo ID law was challenged in federal court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit upheld the decision of U.S. District Court Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos that Texas’ strict voter identification law discriminated against blacks and Hispanics and violated Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

Mr. Speaker, protecting voting rights and combating voter suppression schemes are two of the critical challenges facing our great democracy.

Without safeguards to ensure that all citizens have equal access to the polls, more injustices are likely to occur and the voices of millions silenced.

I believe that Texas, the Lone Star State, can be the leading state in the Union.

But to realize that future, we cannot return to the dark days of its past and must remain ever vigilant and oppose schemes that will abridge or dilute the precious right to vote.

That means standing up to and calling out groups and organizations like “True the Vote” and its local Houston-based affiliate, the “King Street Patriots,” which in recent years have under the guise of poll watchers, improperly interacted with persons at polling stations in Hispanic and African American communities in an attempt to intimidate them from voting.

The behavior of this group was so outrageous in 2010 that I reported its conduct to the Attorney General and requested the De-

partment of Justice to investigate. (See Attachment, Letter from Congresswoman JACKSON LEE to U.S. Attorney General Holder (October 28, 2010)).

Mr. Speaker, in many ways Texas is ground-zero for testing and perfecting schemes to deprive communities of color and language minorities of the right to vote and to have their votes counted.

Consider what has transpired in Texas in recent past.

Only 68 percent of eligible voters are registered in Texas and state restrictions on third party registration, such as the Volunteer Deputy Registrar program, exacerbate the systemic disenfranchisement of minority communities.

These types of programs are often aimed at minority and underserved communities that, for many, many other reasons (like demonization by the president, for example) or mistrust of law enforcement are afraid to live as openly as they should.

In Harris County, we had a system where voters were getting purged from the rolls, effectively requiring people to keep active their registrations and hundreds of polling locations closed in Texas, significantly more in number and percentage than any other state.

In addition, the Texas Election Code only requires a 72-hour notice of polling location changes.

Next, take what happened here in Texas earlier this year when the Texas Secretary of State claimed that his office had identified 95,000 possible noncitizens on the voter rolls and gave the list to the Texas State Attorney General for possible prosecution—leading to a claim from President Trump about widespread voter fraud and outrage from Democrats and activist groups.

The only problem was that list was not accurate.

At least 20,000 names turned out to be there by mistake, leading to chaos, confusion, and concern that people’s eligibility vote was being questioned based on flawed data.

The list was made through state records going back to 1996 that show which Texas residents were not citizens when they got a driver’s license or other state ID.

But many of the person who may have had green cards or work visas at the time they got a Texas ID are on the secretary of state’s office’s list, and many have become citizens since then since nearly 50,000 people become naturalized U.S. citizens in Texas annually.

Latinos made up a big portion of the 95,000-person list.

Texas Republicans adopted racial and partisan gerrymandered congressional, State legislative redistricting plans that federal courts have ruled violate the Voting Rights Act and were drawn with discriminatory intent.

Even after changes were demanded by the courts, much of the damage done was already done.

Reversing the position by the Obama administration, the U.S. Department of Justice has told a federal court that it no longer believes past discrimination by Texas officials should require the state to get outside approval for redistricting maps that will be drawn in 2021.

In addition to affirmative ways to making it harder to vote, we also know face other odious impediments in Texas.

Those of us who cherish the right to vote justifiably are skeptical of Voter ID laws because we understand how these laws, like poll

taxes and literacy tests, can be used to impede or negate the ability of seniors, racial and language minorities, and young people to cast their votes.

This is the harm that can be done without preclearance, so on a federal level, there is an impetus to act.

Those of us who cherish the right to vote justifiably are skeptical of Voter ID laws because we understand how these laws, like poll taxes and literacy tests, can be used to impede or negate the ability of seniors, racial and language minorities, and young people to cast their votes.

Consider the demographic groups who lack a government issued ID:

1. African Americans: 25 percent.
2. Asian Americans: 20 percent.
3. Hispanic Americans: 19 percent.
4. Young people, aged 18–24: 18 percent.
5. Persons with incomes less than \$35,000: 15 percent.

And there are other ways abridging or suppressing the right to vote, including:

1. Curtailing or eliminating early voting
2. Ending same-day registration
3. Not counting provisional ballots cast in the wrong precinct on Election Day will not count.
4. Eliminating adolescent pre-registration
5. Shortening poll hours.
6. Lessening the standards governing voter challenges thus allowing self-proclaimed “ballot security vigilantes” like the King Street Patriots to cause trouble at the polls.

The malevolent practice of voter purging is not limited to Texas; we saw it just last year in Georgia, where then Secretary of State and now Governor Brian Kemp purged more than 53,000 persons from the voter, nearly the exact margin of his narrow win over his opponent, Stacy Abrams in the 2018 gubernatorial election.

Voter purging is a sinister and malevolent practice visited on voters, who are disproportionately members of communities of color, by state and local election officials.

This practice, which would have not passed muster under section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, has proliferated in the years since the Supreme Court neutralized the preclearance provision, or as Justice Ginsburg observed in *Shelby County v. Holder*, “threw out the umbrella” of protection.

Mr. Speaker, citizens in my congressional district and elsewhere know and have experienced the pain and heartbreak of receiving a letter from state or local election officials that they have been removed from the election rolls, or worse, learn this fact on Election Day.

That is why I worked so hard to secure language in the Manager’s Amendment to H.R. 4 that strengthens the bill’s “practice-based preclearance” provisions by adding specifically to the preclearance provision, voting practices that add a new basis or process for removing a name from the list of active registered voters and the practice of reducing the days or hours of in-person voting on Sundays during an early voting period.

Mr. Speaker, it is the responsibility and sacred duty of all members of Congress who revere democracy to preserve, protect, and expand the precious right to vote of all Americans by passing H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Before concluding there is one other point I would like to stress.

In his address to the nation before signing the Voting Rights Act of 1965, President Johnson said:

“Presidents and Congresses, laws and lawsuits can open the doors to the polling places and open the doors to the wondrous rewards which await the wise use of the ballot.

“But only the individual Negro, and all others who have been denied the right to vote, can really walk through those doors, and can use that right, and can transform the vote into an instrument of justice and fulfillment.”

In other words, political power—and the justice, opportunity, inclusion, and fulfillment it provides—comes not from the right to vote but in the exercise of that right.

And that means it is the civic obligation of every citizen to both register and vote in every election, state and local as well as federal.

Because if we can register and vote, but fail to do so, we are guilty of voluntary voter suppression, the most effective method of disenfranchisement ever devised.

And in recent years, Americans have not been doing a very good job of exercising our civic responsibility to register, vote, and make their voices heard.

Mr. Speaker, for millions of Americans, the right to vote protected by the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is sacred treasure, earned by the sweat and toil and tears and blood of ordinary Americans who showed the world it was possible to accomplish extraordinary things.

So today, let us rededicate ourselves to honoring those who won for us this precious right by remaining vigilant and fighting against both the efforts of others to abridge or suppress the right to vote and our own apathy in exercising this sacred right.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

A final statement of something I am about to submit for the RECORD, it is a Statement of Administration Policy. It says this: “In sum, several provisions of H.R. 4 violate principles of federalism and exceed the powers granted to Congress by the Constitution, and these provisions would likely be found unlawful if challenged. Accordingly, the administration opposes H.R. 4.”

Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD this Statement of Administration Policy.

STATEMENT OF ADMINISTRATION POLICY  
H.R. 4—VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT OF  
2019

(Rep. Sewell, D–AL, and 229 cosponsors)

The Administration opposes passage of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019. H.R. 4 would amend the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965 by imposing a new coverage formula and transparency obligations on States and local jurisdictions regarding their elections. These amendments raise serious policy concerns because the Federal Government would be granted excessive control over State and local election practices. Additionally, the Supreme Court has already held similar restrictions imposed by Congress on States and localities to be unconstitutional.

No individual should be denied or deterred from exercising his or her right to vote. Federal law protects against voting discrimination, allows judicial review of State and local voting laws, and establishes preclearance requirements. H.R. 4 would overreach by giving the Federal Government

too much authority over an even greater number of voting practices and decisions made by States and local governments without justifying the current needs for such policies.

Section 3 of H.R. 4 would amend the VRA by setting forth a new coverage formula that subjects certain States and local subdivisions to Federal preclearance requirements before undertaking certain election activities. For example, the coverage formula would place restrictions on States with “15 or more voting rights violations [that] occurred in . . . the previous 25 calendar years.” Once a State or locality is covered by the formula, it would need permission from the Attorney General or Federal courts before conducting certain election activities prescribed by the bill.

In striking down the VRA’s prior coverage formula, the Supreme Court held that although “[o]ur country has changed, and while any racial discrimination in voting is too much, Congress must ensure that the legislation it passes to remedy that problem speaks to current conditions.” *Shelby County v. Holder*, 570 U.S. 529, 557 (2013). Accordingly, the coverage formula set forth in section 3 of H.R. 4 that “imposes substantial federalism costs” on States must therefore be tailored to “current needs.” *Id.* at 540, 553 (internal quotation marks omitted). Instead, section 3 continues to permit reliance on potentially decades-old data—incidents dating as far back as 25 years—as a justification for imposing a preclearance requirement.

Additionally, section 4 of H.R. 4 would create a new “Practice-Based Preclearance” standard, which would automatically subject certain election laws to Federal preclearance, thereby raising significant policy concerns. This section would, among other things, prejudice Federal law against State and local voter integrity efforts, such as voter ID laws, and even impose requirements on routine administrative actions that include changing voting locations.

Finally, H.R. 4 would amend the VRA by imposing additional transparency requirements regarding certain election activities in Federal, State, and local jurisdictions. Section 5 of H.R. 4 raises constitutional concerns because its broad language would interfere with State and local elections beyond the powers afforded by the Elections Clause. Specifically, section 5 would require notice of demographic information related to “any change in the constituency that will participate in an election for Federal, State, or local office.” This broad language would impose notice requirements on States that make redistricting changes despite no Federal election involvement. By doing so, H.R. 4 would impermissibly grant Congress authority beyond what is authorized by the Elections Clause, and therefore section 5 would likely be found unconstitutional.

In sum, several provisions of H.R. 4 violate principles of federalism and exceed the powers granted to Congress by the Constitution, and these provisions would likely be found unlawful if challenged. Accordingly, the Administration opposes H.R. 4.

If H.R. 4 were presented to the President, his advisors would recommend that he veto it.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1100

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Washington (Ms. JAYAPAL).

Ms. JAYAPAL. Mr. Chairman, I am so proud today to stand here to support H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement

Act. And I want to congratulate my incredible colleague Congresswoman SEWELL for her leadership.

When Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965, it was a recognition that systemic discrimination based on race continued to deny people the right to vote. And as an organizer, I understand the Voting Rights Act as a victory that was hard fought by Black activists like Fannie Lou Hamer and Ella Baker and, of course, our esteemed colleague Representative LEWIS, who devoted their lives to fighting for the right to vote. And it was a victory of the movement that recognized that this right to vote is absolutely fundamental to our concept and our actualization of democracy.

Unfortunately, we have not followed with the same courage. Instead, since 2013, States have enacted laws that have suppressed voting rights across the country, and today, half of the country faces stricter voting regulations than they did 9 years ago.

If we want a true democracy, Mr. Speaker, we must protect the right to vote for all, and this bill is critical to doing that.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished majority leader.

(Mr. HOYER asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman of the Judiciary Committee for yielding me time, and I thank him for his leadership. And, of course, I thank TERRI SEWELL, who is from Selma, Alabama, who has been a fighter for voting rights all of her life. I thank her for sponsoring this bill along with myself and so many others.

It was in Selma in 1965 that another friend and one of our dearest colleagues, JOHN LEWIS, was nearly beaten to death for having the audacity to demand the right to vote, the right to register, the right to participate in a meaningful way in our democracy. That year, after that Bloody Sunday in March of 1965 and the later march to Montgomery that followed soon after, Congress enacted the Voting Rights Act to protect against voter suppression and voter disenfranchisement.

One of its core provisions required that the Federal Justice Department preclear any changes to voting rules in jurisdictions that have a history of discrimination and voter suppression. Let me, as an aside say, that these elections are Federal elections, so very frankly, my constituents have an interest in making sure that constituents of every other district have an opportunity to have their voice heard.

This is not a State's rights issue, as the administration puts forth. This is an issue of America's values as a democracy, which is that all Americans—and that was not always the case, we had to amend the Constitution of the

United States in order to effect that end—that all Americans have the right and ought to be facilitated in exercising that right to vote.

Sadly, we know that, notwithstanding the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, State after State, jurisdiction after jurisdiction, not solely in the south, adopted policies aimed at preventing the exercise of the franchise, of preventing the ability to register to vote and to neuter the vote being cast by redistricting efforts that in effect put people in a place where they could not elect the person of their choice.

As a result, millions of Americans after the Voting Rights Act was adopted were finally able to vote and have their voices heard in their democracy. However, we ought to be chastened as we consider this legislation in knowing that for 100 years after the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments were adopted, for 100 years, for a century, it was still necessary for the JOHN LEWIS and the Martin Luther Kings to march. Some gave their lives to redeem that promise that so many gave their lives to ensure.

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court struck down the formula for that preclearance process in 2013 and charged Congress with updating it. We have responded this day to that charge. Under the previous Republican-led Congress, that charge was ignored.

Again, I would ask my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle to think of their failure to act. Ronald Reagan said to Gorbachev, "Tear down this wall."

Today, we have an opportunity to tear down the wall of discrimination and exclusion to millions of Americans who have been confronted with policies that make it more difficult for them to vote.

I hope the Senate will join us in tearing down this wall of discrimination, oppression, and exclusion. I continue to believe that the decision made by the Supreme Court was a bad decision, which did not reflect the reality of the success of the preclearance provisions in the Voting Rights Act.

Indeed, Justice Ginsburg pointed out in her dissent that, "Throwing out preclearance when it has worked and is continuing to work to stop discriminatory changes is like throwing out your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet."

Today, the Democratic-led House will vote to restore the full force of the Voting Rights Act. And I hope every Republican will join us if they want to ensure that discriminatory practices do not prevent citizens from voting.

We have given this bill the designation of H.R. 4. I said in a press conference a little time ago, H.R. 4, H.R. for the people. Whether you spell it F-O-R or F-O-U-R, this is for the people, for our democracy, for justice, for inclusion. We have given this bill the designation of H.R. 4, appropriately, because it is one of our most important

pieces of legislation. Along with H.R. 1, the For the People Act, which contained a number of provisions strengthening ballot access, making voter registration automatic, and expanding early voting, H.R. 4 is part of the Democrats' effort to protect Americans' fundamental right to vote.

H.R. 4, my colleagues, restores the full protections of the Voting Rights Act. As you take your card and contemplate putting it in the slot and pushing either the green button or the red button, reflect upon those who died, not only in the civil rights movement, but those who died on foreign shores defending freedom and democracy. Because as you vote today, you will be voting to defend or to ignore the fundamental formula for democracy, which is having people's votes count.

By updating the preclearance formula requiring reasonable public notice before changes to voting laws or regulations; permitting the Attorney General to request the presence of election observers anywhere there is a threat of racial discrimination at the ballot box—these are not just State elections, I tell my friends; these are elections, which impact my constituents in your State and every other State, when they elect Members of Congress, in the United States Senate—and increasing accessibility and protections for Native Americans and Alaska-native voters.

Again, I want to thank Representative SEWELL for her leadership in this effort and JOHN LEWIS and so many other heroes; my friend JIM CLYBURN, the Democrat whip, who fought for voting rights; for all those of African American descent who fought for voting rights; for Native Americans, the first two women of whom we have in the Congress now.

I thank Chairman NADLER for working closely with TERRI SEWELL and others to strengthen this legislation by including language to ensure that jurisdictions that purge voter rolls or reduce early voting opportunities are subject to preclearance requirements.

It is very nice to say, Well, you can file a suit after the election is over. You may not have the money to do that, and, in any event, it is a fait accompli. It is too late. That is why preclearance has been honored for half a century, and that is why it is so sad that the Supreme Court set it aside.

And, of course, I want to thank, one more time, my dear friend, JOHN LEWIS, who throughout his lifetime has held up the beloved community. Voting rights is part of that beloved community. In Selma 54 years ago, JOHN risked his future, his life and his limb, so every American could cast a vote.

Today 434 of us ought to join JOHN LEWIS, not walking across the bridge with Alabama troopers waiting to beat us and confront us, but to that little box where we have the right to vote. Nobody can stop us from voting in that box today. Let's make sure that nobody stops any of our fellow Americans

from putting their card in that voting slot and making democracy all that our Founders promised it to be.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES).

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, the right to vote is precious and central to the integrity of our democracy. It is not a Democratic issue or a Republican issue. It is an American issue.

The Republican party used to support the unfettered right to vote. In fact, every single time the Voting Rights Act has been reauthorized, it was signed by a Republican President: 1970, Richard Nixon; 1975, Gerald Ford; 1982, Ronald Reagan; 2006, George W. Bush. The unfettered right to vote should be a bipartisan issue, but the party of Lincoln is gone. The party of Reagan is gone. The party of McCain is gone. Voter suppression is not a legitimate electoral tactic. It is a stain on our democracy, and it must be crushed.

Vote "yes" on H.R. 4.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to remind those of us voting, we can like this bill or not like this bill, but this is not a reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act. This is in addition to, and it is something we have talked about on our side.

We appreciate the debate going on, but just as a clarification, we are not reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act. The sections that are already there are still going to be there, they are permanently enshrined, and we are not going to be changing that. This is a different part of that, and we would just like to make that clear.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1115

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time remains on each side.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) has 10 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) has 20 minutes remaining.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I would simply comment that this is a restoration of the previously authorized Voting Rights Act before the Supreme Court did its dastardly deed.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. RICHMOND).

Mr. RICHMOND. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Let me just pick up where they left off. Whether it is a reauthorization, whether it is a restoration, it does not matter. What this is, is fixing the stain on America that prohibited and stopped African Americans and other minorities from voting.

I rise today torn because, on the one hand, I am elated that this House is fi-

nally moving H.R. 4 so that we can protect the right to vote, but on the other hand, I am disappointed because we have to do it by ourselves, that this is not a bipartisan effort to ensure the precious right to vote.

Many people may say that it is a burden on the States. What about the burden that the States put on us?

In the spirit of Goodman, Chaney, and Schwerner, who were killed so that I could vote, and JOHN LEWIS and others who crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge, who were beaten so that I can vote, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask for everyone to support H.R. 4. We should join hands and do it together.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. GARCIA).

Ms. GARCIA of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank Chairman NADLER for yielding.

I support this bill and its efforts to protect access to the ballot box and advance justice and democracy for all, including Latinos, which represent 77 percent of my district.

Enfranchising minority voters will strengthen our democracy because when all eligible voters can exercise their right, our government works better by living up to its ideals of "we the people."

This bill aims to maintain elections free, fair, and accessible to all eligible voters.

Congress must pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act to restore our ability to prevent voter discrimination. We are all equal at the ballot box, and this bill aims to make sure that that is a reality today, tomorrow, and every day.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in support of H.R. 4.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Georgia (Mrs. MCBATH).

Mrs. MCBATH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

I rise in support of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act, led by our esteemed colleague, Representative SEWELL.

During the civil rights movement, I was the child in the stroller at the March on Washington. My father served as the Illinois branch president of the NAACP for over 25 years, and I was raised to always fight for what is right and just, to stand up for those who do not always have a voice.

My father planned marches to strengthen our voting rights. I can still picture him presiding over meetings at our kitchen table, our house filled with poster boards and preparations and hope.

When it comes to voting rights, my father's work is still unfinished. Today, I am so proud that we are taking this step toward completing that work.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in supporting the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I have made my statements very clear on this, and I will continue to do so. For people who have really struggled with and want to be a part of this, I am also going to say that this is a time when we can reach out occasionally across the aisle, and I can help my chairman with a little bit of time.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. CLYBURN).

Mr. CLYBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. COLLINS) for yielding me the time.

I have been thinking a lot this morning about my growing up in South Carolina. I still remember as a young man driving in a driving rain from Charleston, South Carolina, going up to the little town of Kingstree in Williamsburg County, which I now represent here in this body.

On that day, Martin Luther King, Jr., was coming to Williamsburg County to extol the necessity of voting to all of us. I will never forget his theme that day, "march to the ballot box."

It was just a few months after the 1965 Voting Rights Act had been passed into law, and that law has been renewed time and time again throughout the years. But several years ago, the Supreme Court took a look at the law and decided that the formula that had been used in section 4 should be updated.

This bill, thanks to the work of TERRI SEWELL from Alabama and MARCIA FUDGE from Ohio, we have had 17 hearings around the country, eight by the Judiciary Committee—I thank Chairman NADLER so much for that—and nine by MARCIA FUDGE's committee. We have wrapped all of those findings into one bill because we are adhering to what Chief Justice Roberts asked us to do: update the formula.

We have updated the formula. We are putting it on the floor today, and I do believe that this piece of legislation is deserving of bipartisan support.

I can remember when this voting rights bill would pass both houses unanimously. Let's do that today and demonstrate that we are making this democracy work for all.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY).

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 4 for the people, the Voting Rights Advancement Act. I thank my colleagues, Representatives SEWELL, FUDGE, NADLER, and many others, for their extraordinary work on this critical legislation that protects the most basic and fundamental of American rights, the right to vote.

Ever since the 2013 Supreme Court Shelby decision threw out the preclearance requirement, undermining the Voting Rights Act, States and localities with histories of racial injustice have again started discriminatory voting practices, like requiring IDs, which is particularly harmful to

Hispanic voters; moving voting places so it is more difficult to vote; and many other steps that disenfranchise countless Americans, particularly men and women of color.

This bill restores the Voting Rights Act in its entirety, repeals the Shelby decision, and gives the Federal Government the tools to hold local election officials accountable for discriminatory practices that deny Americans of this fundamental right.

So many brave Americans have made the ultimate sacrifice to protect this right for our people. By passing this legislation, we honor their sacrifice by protecting the right to vote for every single citizen.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. CASTRO).

Mr. CASTRO of Texas. Mr. Speaker, the right to vote in our Nation is fundamental to our democracy, and that right to vote continues to come under assault.

States with a history of denying and blocking the right to vote, like my home State of Texas, are no longer held in check by the preclearance requirement of the Voting Rights Act. Worried that changing demographics erode their political power, Texas leaders continue to make voting more difficult for Latinos and other communities of color.

For example, since the Shelby case, the Texas secretary of state attempted to purge nearly 100,000 foreign-born U.S. citizens from voter rolls; the Texas Legislature restricted mobile voting sites designed to make voting more convenient; at least 750 polling locations have been closed, more than any other State; a voter ID law went into effect that a Federal judge later ruled was enacted to intentionally discriminate against Black and Latino voters.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation is important to protect every American's right to vote, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE).

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) for yielding.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was a direct response to evidence of significant and pervasive racial discrimination across the country.

My home State of Wisconsin really has suffered under the Supreme Court decision of 2013. After that ruling, then-Governor Scott Walker, someone I had been fighting since 1990 to prevent him from enacting an onerous voter ID law, he prevailed in 2016.

The very first year that that voter ID law was enacted was in 2016. According to a study done by the University of Wisconsin, between 12,000 and 23,000

registered voters in Madison and Milwaukee, and as many as 45,000 statewide, were deterred from voting by the ID law. The President, of course, won our State by a mere 23,000 votes.

Mr. Speaker, it is important and imperative that we restore enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. I urge my colleagues to vote for this great legislation.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding and bringing H.R. 4 to this floor.

I would like to thank Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL for her very consistent efforts to restore the vote and also our Chairwoman MARCIA FUDGE of the Subcommittee on Elections for holding hearings throughout the country, which actually established the foundation for this bill.

The 1965 Voting Rights Act repaired damage in our communities whose voting rights were denied. Dr. Martin Luther King once said he saw that as a great step forward.

However, in 2013, the Supreme Court gutted the Voting Rights Act in the Shelby v. Holder decision. As a result, the Nation saw nearly 20 percent fewer polling locations and 17 million voters purged from voting rolls in States with patterns of voter suppression. This is especially true for communities of color, whose votes have been silenced over the years due to this disastrous Court decision.

Voting is the backbone of our democracy and something that every American should have the right to access.

I was born and raised in El Paso, Texas, and I vividly remember the denial of full citizenship of African Americans.

Mr. Speaker, we need a system that is strong, free, and fair. I urge my colleagues to move forward in a bipartisan way and pass H.R. 4.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Michigan (Mrs. LAWRENCE).

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Mr. Speaker, I stand today as the chair of the Women's Caucus and as a member of the executive board of the Congressional Black Caucus, and I stand in strong support of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

These repeated attacks on our right to vote have severely undermined the people's fundamental voting rights, which are the principles of our democracy.

H.R. 4 helps protect citizens' ability to register to vote and provides real enforcement so that marginalized communities, like women who celebrate their 100th year to vote and African American communities, will have proper access to the ballot box.

The right to vote is the cornerstone of our democracy, and we must ensure

that every eligible American voter has the ability to have their vote heard.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes."

□ 1130

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire how much time each side has left.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from New York has 2 minutes remaining.

The gentleman from Georgia has 18 minutes remaining.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the distinguished gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. FRANKEL).

Ms. FRANKEL. Mr. Speaker, voting is the cornerstone of our democracy. It has been a hard-fought right. We must ensure that every American that is eligible to vote can make their voice heard.

This right has been trampled on after the Shelby County v. Holder Court decision, which has unleashed a flood of State and local voter suppression laws, silencing targeted voters, particularly communities of color.

In my home State of Florida, laws and policies have cut back early voting, established English-only ballots, and are now trying to thwart efforts to restore voting rights to ex-felons, hurting access to the ballot box for Floridians.

H.R. 4 will push back against suppressive voting laws, restoring the great equalizer for democracy and for our people.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, we have only one remaining speaker, who will be our closing speaker, so the gentleman from Georgia may wish to close for his side.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. COLLINS of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to close.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity at the time we have laid this out. There have been exhaustive hearings on this.

Our objection to this is not about anything else except that we feel the wording of this and the way this bill is laid out is not good for our country, much of it will not be held up and will not have its intended consequences.

I am one who believes and has a State that has been very active in seeing our minority rolls and our minority voting participation increase dramatically over the last 4 or 5 years, after, even, the Shelby decision.

That is an undisputed fact; although, many times, it has been disputed in many public speeches saying Georgia is going backwards. We are not. Georgia is going forward and had many, many successes over the last little bit encouraging minority voting. From my perspective, that is exactly what we are supposed to be doing.

So, simply, as we have looked at it, we must move forward with ways that we make sure every person who wants to vote has the ability to vote and does so in a proper and legal way. That has never been a discussion from our side. My only objection here is the way this goes about it.

And there have been many other issues that we have brought up on numerous, numerous occasions about how this could actually have adverse effects across the country, especially if people wanted to really mess with our voting system and play it for political gain. That is not a discussion that we are having right here because we have had this in multiple hearings up to this point.

So I think, for the voter who looks today, this is something that is going forward with a good-hearted attempt. I will never question the motivations of what is happening here. I just question the very fact of what words are on paper.

We do not, in this body, vote on ideas. We do not vote on thoughts. We vote on words on paper. And the words on paper here do not fulfill what is being said about this bill.

With that said, I would ask that we vote “no.” There are plenty of opportunities for us to continue to work on this, just not in this current situation. I respectfully request that people would vote “no” and that we move forward with something that actually possibly could work at a future date.

But from the majority side, this has nothing to do with people voting or not voting. We want everyone to vote and everyone to participate, but we want to do so in a fair and legal way.

This is something that we actually think would actually hurt that in the long run as we go forward. That is why we are asking that this be voted down, will not support it today, and, along with the administration, who has said that it will be vetoed if it does reach his desk, this is something we would rather find a way to have a bill that could suffice or could make the provisions of this bill even stronger. This is not happening today.

Mr. Speaker, I will ask for a “no” vote when this comes forward, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PELOSI), the distinguished Speaker of the House.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding, Mr. NADLER, the distinguished chair of the Judiciary Committee. I thank him for his leadership in bringing this important opportunity for America to the floor of the House today.

I commend Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL for her tremendous leadership, the gentlewoman from Alabama, who knows this subject well, personally, geographically, and officially, now, as a leading member of the House of Representatives. I thank her for her leadership.

I thank Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE for holding field hearings from Alabama to Arizona on this urgent issue of voting rights. That scope of Alabama to Arizona is not alphabetically a big range, but, geographically and experience-wise, it is.

And to Congressman JOHN LEWIS, the conscience of the Congress, what an honor it is for each and every one of us to serve with him, to call him colleague and, in many cases, to call him friend. He is a civil rights hero of the House, whose Voter Empowerment Act was the backbone of H.R. 1, the For the People Act.

Because there is some resistance on the side of the aisle here to our reducing the role of dark money in politics, which is a significant part of H.R. 1, we pulled out H.R. 4 as its own vehicle on the floor, and I thank all the House Democrats who came to Congress committed to restoring the right to the ballot, reflected in our naming of this legislation, H.R. 4, one of our top priorities.

And I say Democrats, but it saddens me to hear the distinguished ranking member’s comments about this legislation and urging a “no” vote on the Republican side, because I was leader when we passed the Voting Rights Act that the Court sent us back to the drawing board on.

At that time, we had around 400 votes in the House of Representatives, upwards of 395, 400 votes, a completely bipartisan vote to pass that bill; and it was unanimous in the United States Senate, not partisan in any way. And we have come to a place where the Court said you need to do this or thus.

We followed Justice Roberts’ guidance; and now, with the improvements insisted upon by Justice Roberts, the Republicans have gone from being part of a nearly 400-vote majority on the bill to, hopefully, not being unanimously against it, but we will see.

Mr. Speaker, nearly 55 years ago, President Lyndon Johnson came to the House of Representatives. He came on the House floor to urge passage of the Voting Rights Act “for the dignity of man and the destiny of democracy.”

He declared: “This was the first nation in the history of the world to be founded with a purpose. . . . ‘All men are created equal.’

“Those are not just clever words. . . . In their name, Americans have fought and died for two centuries. . . . Those words are a promise to every citizen that he shall share in the dignity of man.”

He continued: “Our fathers believed that if this noble view of the rights of man was to flourish, it must be rooted in democracy . . . the right to choose your own leaders. The history of this country, in large measure, is the history of the expansion of that right to all of our people.”

Yet, a half century later, the constitutional right of all Americans to determine their leaders and the destiny of our democracy is under great assault

from a brazen, nationwide voter suppression campaign.

Since the *Shelby v. Holder* decision, 23 States—maybe more—have enacted voter suppression laws, including voter purges, strict ID requirements, poll closures, and vote intimidation, denying millions their voices by their vote.

The record compiled by the committees shows that the counties with the worst histories of voter suppression doubled down on their discrimination during this time, purging 17 million voters from the rolls between 2016 and 2018 alone, primarily people of color.

Today, the House is honoring our Nation’s sacred pledge—all are created equal—by passing H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

This bill restores the Voting Rights Act’s strength to combat the clear resurgence of voter discrimination unleashed by *Shelby* by updating the data determining which States and practices are covered by the law. No longer will cynical politicians and States with dark histories of discrimination have a green light to freely continue their systematic suppression campaign.

When President Johnson spoke on this floor, he said: “There must be no delay, no hesitation, and no compromise with our purpose. . . . We have already waited a hundred years and more, and the time for waiting is gone.”

Indeed, it took the courage and the ultimate sacrifice of countless Americans, including our own JOHN LEWIS, to secure the passage of the Voting Rights Act. Honoring and strengthening that legacy is essential to our democracy. We want to be sure that everyone who is eligible to vote can vote and that that person’s vote is counted as cast.

Today, too, the time for waiting is gone. We must pass this bill, which is a vote for civil rights, liberty, and justice for all.

I thank Mr. NADLER, MARCIA FUDGE, and TERRI SEWELL, the author of this legislation, which she introduced now to the third Congress, for giving us the privilege to be part of honoring the pledge of our Founders: All are created equal.

Mr. Speaker, I urge an “aye” vote on the bill.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to support H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019.

This bill restores the full power of the Voting Rights Act, after the 2013 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* eviscerated it. It will also restore critical voting protections to ensure that discriminatory voter suppression laws do not block Americans from participating in the electoral process.

The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy. During the civil rights movement, courageous Americans fought in the courts, marched, agitated, and gave the “last full measure of devotion” for all Americans to be able to exercise their precious right to vote. The bill includes provisions that promote transparency by mandating reasonable public notice for voting changes. It also grants the Attorney General the authority to request the

presence of federal observers anywhere in the country to prevent voter suppression efforts and to address discrimination based on race in the voting process. In addition, this bill authorizes a federal court to order States or jurisdictions to be covered under the Act when there are results-based violations, where the effect of a voting measure is racial discrimination in voting and blocking citizens from utilizing their right to vote.

For all these reasons and more, today, I am so proud to stand with my colleagues and members of the Congressional Black Caucus in support of the passage of H.R. 4, and want to send a special thank you to my colleagues Congresswoman TERRI SEWELL and Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE who have fearlessly and brilliantly led this fight in the House of Representatives.

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019. This bill restores the full strength of the Voting Rights Act, after a 2013 Supreme Court Decision gutted the Act. The result was a flood of voter suppression laws throughout the country.

The possibility of restoring a democratic process that has stifled the black and brown vote in the U.S. deserves our support. We must never allow our constitutional rights to be diminished or even eliminated.

In 2013, the Supreme Court decision, *Shelby County v. Holder*, struck down the existing formula that determined which states and political subdivisions were required to seek federal pre-approval for their voting-related changes. This was to ensure they did not discriminate against minority voters. The Supreme Court put the onus on Congress to enact a new formula, which resulted in States and political subdivisions not being required to seek preclearance unless ordered by a federal court.

H.R. 4 restores the Section 5 preclearance process by including a new formula for coverage that ensures that only States and jurisdictions with a recent history of discrimination or use of voter suppression practices would be subject to review before implementing new voting laws or procedures.

H.R. 4 protects the sacred rights of minority voters and helps identify discriminatory voting practices. Congress must protect our polls and support H.R. 4 to ensure the constitutional right to vote for every citizen of the United States.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I include in the RECORD the following letters of support for H.R. 4.

FAITH LEADER CALL ON CONGRESS TO  
RESTORE THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT NOW

Voting is a sacred right and a cornerstone of democracy. We desperately need to protect every American's right to vote—and right now this right is endangered by gaps in the law. Our spiritual ancestors in the Civil Rights Movement fought for the Voting Rights Act. We must honor their sacrifices today by passing the Voting Rights Advancement Act.—Rev. Dr. Jennifer Butler, CEO, Faith in Public Life

We stand on the shoulders of so many in our nation who have shown courage and resistance to realize their right to vote, who have fought tirelessly to make sure America lives up to its full potential. Voting is a crucial part of what we must do to hold our elected officials—to hold America—accountable to not just the dream that Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. laid out for us, but also the

promise that America has held since its beginnings. Yes, it's a promise historically marred by injustice, but it is the promise of a better way. It is a sin and a shame to witness how voting rights have been suppressed and denied since 2013. Voting is a way that we claim the freedom that we have in America. Our most urgent request to Congress is the same as that made by MLK over 40 years ago: give us the ballot.—Rev. Dr. Leslie Copeland-Tune, Chief Operating Officer, National Council of Churches

By our own admission, within our most precious documents, we acknowledge that ALL people are part of God's creation and that we are one nation under God. As such, our democracy says that every citizen should be respected regardless of sex, race, national origin, etc. and that the government is accountable to defend and protect the rights of its public, its citizens. The most precious nature of America society is the right to vote. We have the dignity of citizenship rights; laws are necessary to defend that dignity and those rights, unobstructed, so citizens can enjoy voting and electing their officials.—Imam Dr. Talib M. Shareef, USAF-Retired, President, Masjid Muhammad, The Nation's Mosque

My faith teaches that every person is imbued with dignity, and in a secular democracy our vote is an indicator of that worth. Voter suppression and intimidation is a familiar, age-old practice of marginalizing people in poverty and people of color. A democratic system that suppresses the vote of any citizen is not only unconstitutional, it is dehumanizing. This dehumanizing must stop! Our nation is better than this. A significant step forward would be to pass a 21st Century Voting Rights Act now. This cannot wait. It is the faithful and patriotic way forward.—Sister Simone Campbell, SSS, Executive Director of NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice

The United Methodist Church affirms the critical role of governments in protecting the rights of all people to free and fair elections. In particular, the Church support efforts to dismantle policies and practices that disenfranchise communities of color and perpetuate systemic injustice.—Rev. Dr. Susan Henry-Crowe, General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church

The Religious Society of Friends (Quaker) faith was founded on the belief in the equality of all. Voter suppression in the United States violates this central belief and we must work to assure everyone has the right to vote. We call on lawmakers across the nation to take a stand against voter suppression and pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4).—Diane Randall, Executive Secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation

The requirement of society to provide human dignity for all, which stands at the root of all theological traditions, strikes a blow at the very heart of the spurious arguments made by those who want to prevent others from voting based on age, race, disability, or history of contact with the criminal justice system. As an organization that works with many who come from communities that have been historically subjected to all forms of discrimination, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture believes that the right to vote and to fully participate in the democracy is a sacred right and one that should never be taken away from anyone, for any reason.—Rev. Dr. Ron Stief, Executive Director, National Religious Campaign Against Torture

As Franciscans, our Christian faith teaches us that we must recognize each person as a gift from God, and that we must emphasize the importance of the essential humanity

and dignity of each person. Pope Francis has called on us to “meddle in politics” and we interpret this concept as a requirement that all Americans must have an equal say in the public square. Therefore, we must immediately call on Congress to pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act to ensure that all Americans are able to vote.—Patrick Carolan, Executive Director, Franciscan Action Network

At the National Council of Jewish Women, we are guided by the Jewish imperative to pursue tzedek, or justice. For justice to be realized, all eligible voters must have an opportunity to participate in the electoral process. Without access to the ballot, we can't elect lawmakers who represent our communities and our needs. Congress must restore the full strength of the Voting Rights Act without delay.—Sheila Katz, CEO, National Council of Jewish Women

It was when the collective voice of the people cried out to the Lord in Exodus 3:9 that God hears and sent deliverance to Nation of Israel! Voting by the oppressed was the way black people could lift up their voices, cry out, and participate in creating a more just nation! Restoration of the Voting Rights Act so all voices are heard is essential to perfecting this nation and assuring that it does not return to and separate but unequal society!—Rev. Reuben D. Eckels, Church World Service (CWS)

Since voting is so fundamental to our democracy, all citizens should be committed to making it possible for everyone to exercise that right. The Voting Rights Advancement Act is critical to having a genuine representative democracy and to make sure that the most vulnerable populations are not disenfranchised from the democratic process. People of faith are concerned that the voice of the people be truly representative of all the people.—Bishop John Stowe, Bishop-President, Pax Christi USA

In the Bible, we are reminded that “when justice is done, it brings joy to the righteous” (Proverbs 21:15). The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) understands that justice is done when we live out our mutual responsibility for one another by guaranteeing our neighbor's right to vote and participate freely and fully in society. In 2013, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, our denomination's highest legislative authority, adopted a social policy resolution titled Voting Rights to All Citizens. This resolution calls us to express concern for our nation's history of voter suppression from the Jim Crow era to the current climate of restrictive voter laws that create barriers to many people of color in their right to vote. This resolution calls on all part of this church to “promote public life worthy of the name” by speaking out as advocates and engaging in local efforts such as voter registration and supporting legislation to guarantee the right to vote to all citizens. We support the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 2978) as a key step in ensuring the voices of all citizens will be safeguarded and heard through its provisions which would help reinstate guidelines that ensure protection through oversight and combat voter suppression.—Rev. Amy Reumann, Director of Advocacy, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has been a long-time advocate for voting rights. We were deeply dismayed by the actions of the Supreme Court to void Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. This decision left many people of color vulnerable to discriminatory voting laws that have historically plagued communities of color. Voting is our right as U.S. citizens. Taking away or restricting one's ability to exercise their voice at the polls is not only immoral; it is unconstitutional. The actions of many states in passing

extremely restrictive voting laws are unjust and must be addressed. As the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once stated, “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Congress must stand on the side of justice and restore the Voting Rights Act.—Rev. Jimmie R. Hawkins, Director of the Presbyterian Church (USA), Office of Public Witness

As Reform Jews, our teachings motivate our advocacy to protect voting rights and fight voter suppression. Rabbi Yitzhak taught, “A ruler is not to be appointed unless the community is first consulted,” (Babylonian Talmud Berachot 55a). Diminished federal voter protections and rampant voter suppression undermines the ability of all people, particularly communities of color, to participate in our democracy. It is time for Congress to restore those protections and pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4/S. 561). Our faith’s commitment to political participation demands that Congress pass this Shelby fix as a step towards ensuring that the whole community is represented.—Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

Voting is at the heart of the democratic process. It is the most fundamental access point for individuals to have a voice in the public policy decision-making process that can shape the future of our local, regional and global collective life. As people of faith, we believe every vote is a voice, and every voice counts. It is unconscionable that we are entering the 2020 election season with fewer voting rights protections than we had in 1965. This signals an erosion of our democracy that is a moral crisis. The right to vote is a national value that transcends partisanship. It goes beyond political party identification to our core values as a nation and the centrality of a citizen’s free vote, not limited by the powers of money, social class and unequal access to voting. It is imperative that we pass a fix for the damage done by the Supreme Court Shelby decision by restoring voter protections.—Sandra Sorensen, Director of Washington Office, United Church of Christ (UCC)

The National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd calls on Congress to pass the Voting Rights Advancement Act. We have seen over the last six years increasing hostility to full voting rights for all Americans since the U.S. Supreme Court partially struck down the Voting Rights Act. We have seen new barriers put up to restrict the number of voters of color, suppressing the full American voice and skewing our response to important civil and human rights issues in need of our attention. As people of faith, we are called to liberate the oppressed and marginalized. Please restore the vote.—Lawrence E. Couch, Director, National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd

It is clearer than ever today that democracy is a process, not a static state. Democracy requires care, investment, and vigilance to ensure all voices are represented. The shameful history of racism in U.S. voting systems is not over, and new approaches designed to restrict certain communities’ access to a free and fair vote cannot be tolerated. The federal government must act now to reinstate and expand protections of voting rights for all people.—Joyce Ajlouny, General Secretary, American Friends Service Committee

The right to vote without any impediments or obstructions is one of the most basic privileges of our democracy belonging to all age-eligible American citizens regardless of race, religion, or gender orientation. I call upon our Senate and House to protect this sacred right which is critical for the defense of all our other rights and privileges.—

Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Haggray, American Baptist Home Mission Societies

American Baptist Churches, USA have officially advocated for voter rights for many decades and we continue “. . . to declare the right to vote to be a basic human right, and support programs and measures to assure this right. The right of citizenship in a nation, to participate in the political process, to form political parties, to have a voice in decisions made in the political arena are basic undeniable human rights. The Bible teaches us that all humanity is created in God’s image and that we are all valuable in God’s sight.”—Dr. C. Jeff Woods, Acting General Secretary, American Baptist Churches, USA

We are the church, the body of Christ in this world, at this time. We need to stop the racist suppression of the votes of people of color. Denying people their right to vote is counter to the will of God. This is especially true when rich and powerful interests seek to deny people who have been historically marginalized from shaping our society. We need to change our policies and our laws to make voting a concrete reality for all of God’s children.—Rev. Ms. Paula Clayton Dempsey, Executive Minister, Alliance of Baptists

People have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and wellbeing of all persons, especially the poor and vulnerable. Voter suppression laws strike at this tenet of Catholic Social Teaching by denying that right to those who are disproportionately poor, especially African American, Native American and Hispanic American communities. As faithful citizens of every faith and humanitarian tradition, we affirm our common responsibility to promote the dignity of every person and to work for justice and the common good. That can only happen if we are all afforded the basic right to vote and to participate fully in our democratic process.—Scott Wright, Director, Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach

As Unitarian Universalists, our 5th Principle affirms “the right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large”. Therefore, we advocate for restoration of full protections under the Voting Rights Act. When our democracy is in peril, so too are our civil rights. Racial discrimination and voter suppression are on the rise—an unacceptable circumstance to freedom-loving citizens of the United States and one that our faith calls us to confront. The pernicious impacts of Shelby County v. Holder must be halted and reversed.

As the leader of a faith-based education, witness and advocacy organization, I know that issues like poverty, immigration, climate change, and rising inequity in our society cannot improve unless we defend the basic tenets of our democracy. Our democracy works best when everyone can fully participate. Congress should strive to make our elections more free, more fair and more accessible. The more Americans who participate in our elections, the better our democracy reflects who we are as a country and the better we can meet the complex challenges of our times.—(Pablo) Pavel DeJesús, Executive Director, Unitarian Universalists for Social Justice (UUSJ).

LAWYERS’ COMMITTEE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER LAW,  
December 3, 2019.

Re Recommended Vote in Favor of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act.

DEAR MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES: On behalf of the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, a

nonpartisan civil rights organization formed at the request of President Kennedy to enlist the private bar’s leadership and resources in combating racial discrimination and securing equal justice under law, I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA). We oppose any Motion to Recommit (MTR).

The VRAA would restore the Section 5 preclearance process that was struck down by the Supreme Court in the 2013 Shelby County v. Holder decision by creating a new formula for coverage that ensures that only states and jurisdictions with a recent history of voting discrimination or use of voter suppression practices would be subject to review prior to implementing new voting laws or procedures.

Prior to Shelby, covered jurisdictions had to provide notice to the federal government—which meant notice to the public—before they could implement changes in their voting practices or procedures. Such notice is of paramount importance, because the ways that the voting rights of minority citizens are jeopardized are often subtle. They range from the consolidation of polling places so as to make it less convenient for minority voters to vote, to the curtailing of early voting hours that makes it more difficult for hourly-wage earners to vote, to the disproportionate purging of minority voters from voting lists under the pretext of “list maintenance.”

In the more than six years since the Shelby decision, the floodgates to voting discrimination have been swung open, threatening the voting rights of millions of Americans. The gutting of the core protection of the Voting Rights Act did not simply harm African Americans and other people of color, it challenged the very foundation of our democracy and our decades-long march towards equality. Voting is the right that is “preservative of all rights,” because it empowers people to elect candidates of their choice, who will then govern and legislate to advance other rights. But, voting rights have always been contested in this country, with gains in turnout and representation by people of color often met with an inevitable backlash that sought to reduce their electoral power.

The passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965 marked a turning point in our nation, when the promise of equal justice and democracy in our Constitution was made real for people of color for the first time in our history. Since that time, overwhelming bipartisan majorities in Congress have reauthorized the Voting Rights Act several times, each time amassing a significant congressional record of the current threats to the franchise and implementing changes to ensure the ongoing efficacy of the Voting Rights Act. Now, we ask you to take the mantle from your predecessors and restore the full protections of the Voting Rights Act by passing H.R. 4, the VRAA.

Thank you for your leadership in protecting the fundamental right to vote and our democracy by voting for H.R. 4, the VRAA, and by opposing any Motion to Recommit.

Sincerely,

KRISTEN CLARKE,  
President & Executive Director.

THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE  
ON CIVIL AND HUMAN RIGHTS,  
Washington, DC, December 4, 2019.

SUPPORT H.R. 4, VOTING RIGHTS  
ADVANCEMENT ACT

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 200 national organizations committed to promoting and

protecting the civil and human rights of all persons in the United States, and the 68 undersigned organizations, we write in strong support of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act. We oppose any Motion to Recommit.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) is one of the most successful civil rights laws ever enacted. Congress passed the VRA in direct response to evidence of significant and pervasive discrimination across the country, including the use of literacy tests, poll taxes, intimidation, threats, and violence. By outlawing the tests and devices that prevented people of color from voting, the VRA and its prophylactic preclearance formula put teeth into the 15th Amendment's guarantee that no citizen can be denied the right to vote because of the color of their skin.

H.R. 4 has received vocal and vigorous support from the civil rights community because it responds to the urgent need to stop the abuses by state and local governments in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's infamous 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, when five justices of the Supreme Court invalidated the VRA's preclearance provision. In its decision, the Court stated: "Our country has changed, and while any racial discrimination in voting is too much, Congress must ensure that the legislation it passes to remedy that problem speaks to current conditions."

Since *Shelby County*, discriminatory policies have proliferated nationwide and continued in areas formerly covered by the preclearance requirement. In states, counties, and cities across the country, public officials have pushed through laws and policies designed to make it harder for many communities to vote. While we have celebrated successful legal challenges to discriminatory voter ID laws in Texas and North Carolina, such victories occurred only after elections in those states were tainted by discrimination. Lost votes cannot be reclaimed and discriminatory elections cannot be undone.

But voter suppression is not merely the province of those states with a long history of discrimination. Pernicious practices such as voter purging and restrictive identification requirements—which disproportionately affect voters of color—occur in states throughout the nation. Although progress has been made, some elected leaders in this country are still working to silence people who were historically denied access to the ballot box.

During the 116th Congress, the U.S. House Committee on the Judiciary held extensive hearings and found significant evidence that barriers to voter participation remain for people of color and language-minority voters in African-American, Asian American, Latinx, and Native American communities. The hearings examined the History and Enforcement of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (March 12, 2019), Enforcement of the Voting Rights Act in the State of Texas (May 3, 2019), Continuing Challenges to the Voting Rights Act Since *Shelby County v. Holder* (June 25, 2019), Discriminatory Barriers to Voting (September 5, 2019), Evidence of Current and Ongoing Voting Discrimination (September 10, 2019), Congressional Authority to Protect Voting Rights After *Shelby County v. Holder* (September 24, 2019), and Legislative Proposals to Strengthen the Voting Rights Act (October 17, 2019). The Committee on House Administration also conducted numerous hearings and amassed significant evidence of voter suppression during the 116th Congress.

H.R. 4 restores and modernizes the Voting Rights Act by:

Creating a new coverage formula that hinges on a finding of repeated voting rights violations in the preceding 25 years.

Significantly, the 25-year period is measured on a rolling basis to keep up with "current conditions," so only states and political subdivisions that have a recent record of racial discrimination in voting are covered.

States and political subdivisions that qualify for preclearance will be covered for a period of 10 years, but if they establish a clean record during that time period, they can be extracted from coverage.

Establishing "practice-based preclearance," a targeted process for reviewing voting changes in jurisdictions nationwide focused on measures that have historically been used to discriminate against voters of color. The process for reviewing changes in voting is limited to a set of practices, including:

Changes to the methods of elections (to or from at-large elections) in areas that are racially, ethnically, or linguistically diverse;

Reductions in language assistance;

Annexations changing jurisdictional boundaries in areas that are racially, ethnically, or linguistically diverse;

Redistricting in areas that are racially, ethnically, or linguistically diverse;

Reducing, consolidating, or relocating polling locations in areas that are racially, ethnically, or linguistically diverse; and

Changes in documentation or requirements to vote or register.

H.R. 4 also:

Allows a federal court to order states or jurisdictions to be covered for results-based violations, where the effect of a particular voting measure is racial discrimination in voting and denying citizens their right to vote;

Increases transparency by requiring reasonable public notice for voting changes;

Allows the attorney general authority to request the presence of federal observers anywhere in the country where there is a serious threat of racial discrimination in voting; and

Revises and tailors the preliminary injunction standard for voting rights actions to recognize that there will be cases where there is a need for immediate preliminary relief.

For over half a century, protecting citizens from racial discrimination in voting has been bipartisan work. The VRA was passed with leadership from both the Republican and Democratic parties, and the reauthorizations of the enforcement provisions were signed into law each time by Republican presidents: President Nixon in 1970, President Ford in 1975, President Reagan in 1982, and President Bush in 2006.

Voting must transcend partisanship. No matter what policy issues we care most about, we get closer to these goals through the ballot box. The integrity of our democracy depends on ensuring that every eligible voter can participate in the electoral process. Passing H.R. 4 would be a giant step toward restoring the right to vote and undoing the damage done by the Supreme Court's *Shelby County* decision. During the civil rights movement, brave Americans gave their lives for the right to vote, and we cannot allow their legacy and the protections they fought for to unravel. We urge Congress to pass this historic legislation.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights; Advancement Project; American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations; African American Ministers In Action; American Association of University Women; American Civil Liberties Union; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME); American Federation of Teachers; Andrew Goodman Foundation; Anti-Defamation League; Arab American Institute;

Asian Americans Advancing Justice—AAJC; Autistic Self Advocacy Network; Bend the Arc; Jewish Action; Blue Future; Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law; Campaign Legal Center.

Connecticut Citizen Action Group; Clean Elections Texas; Communications Workers of America (CWA); Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces; Democracy 21; Democracy Initiative; Demos; End Citizens United Action Fund; FairVote Action; Fix Democracy First; Franciscan Action Network; Generation Progress; Greenpeace USA; Human Rights Campaign; Our Own Voice; National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda; International Union, United Automobile Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, (UAW).

Jewish Council for Public Affairs; Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law; Leadership Conference of Women Religious; League of Conservation Voters Education Fund; League of Women Voters of the United States; Main Street Alliance; Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF); National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.; NALGO Educational Fund; National Action Network; National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd; National Council of Jewish Women; National Disability Rights Network (NDRN); National Education Association.

National Urban League; Native American Rights Fund; NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice; New American Leaders Action Fund; People Demanding Action; People For the American Way; Planned Parenthood Federation of America; Progressive Turnout Project; Public Citizen; Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; Service Employees International Union (SEIU); Sierra Club; Southern Poverty Law Center Action Fund; Stand Up America; Texas Progressive Action Network; UnidosUS; Union for Reform Judaism; United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries; Voices for Progress; YWCA USA.

MALDEF,

December 4, 2019.

Re MALDEF Urges Support of the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019, H.R. 4.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: There is no right more fundamental to our democracy than the right to vote, and for Latino voters and other voters of color, that right is in danger. Following the 2013 *Shelby County v. Holder* decision, which effectively ended preclearance review under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), states and localities moved to implement discriminatory voting practices that would previously have been blocked by the VRA. What we have seen post-*Shelby County* confirms what we have long-known—that voter discrimination lives on. Congress must act to restore the preclearance coverage formula in the VRA, legislation that has long-enjoyed bipartisan support. MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund), the nation's leading Latino legal civil rights organization, urges you to support the Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA) of 2019, H.R. 4, to reenact safeguards to protect minority voters from discriminatory voting laws.

The VRA is regarded as one of the most important and effective pieces of civil rights legislation due to its ability to protect voters of color from discriminatory voting practices before they take place. Since its founding, MALDEF has focused on securing equal

voting rights for Latinos, and promoting increased civic engagement and participation within the Latino community, as among its top priorities. MALDEF played a significant role in securing the full protection of the VRA for the Latino community through the 1975 congressional reauthorization of the VRA. Over its now 51-year history, MALDEF has litigated numerous cases under section 2, section 5, and section 203 of the VRA, challenging at-large systems, discriminatory redistricting, ballot access barriers, undue voter registration restrictions, and failure to provide bilingual materials. As the growth of the Latino population expands, our work in voting rights increases as well.

Section 5 of the VRA required states with a history of discrimination in voting to seek pre-approval of voting-related changes from the U.S. Department of Justice or a three-judge panel in Washington, DC. A voting-related change that would have left minority voters worse off than before the change would be blocked. The states and political subdivisions that were required to submit voting-related changes for preclearance were determined by a coverage formula in section 4 of the VRA. The preclearance scheme—an efficient and effective form of alternative dispute resolution—prevented the implementation of voting-related changes that would have denied voters of color a voice in our elections, and it deterred many more restrictions from ever being conceived. The Supreme Court in *Shelby County*—struck down section 4 and called on Congress to enact a new formula better tailored to current history. As a result, currently, states or political subdivisions are no longer required to seek preclearance unless ordered by a federal court.

However, Chief Justice Roberts recognized in the majority opinion in *Shelby County* that, “voting discrimination still exists; no one doubts that.” Across the U.S., racial, ethnic, and language-minority communities are rapidly growing—the country’s total population is projected to become majority minority by 2044. Many officials in states and local jurisdictions fear losing political power, and the rapid growth of communities of color is often seen as a threat to existing political establishments. Fear provokes those in positions of power to implement changes to dilute the voting power of the perceived threatening minority community. Unfortunately, now that states and local jurisdictions are not required to submit voting-related changes for review, there is no longer a well-kept track record on newly implemented discriminatory practices. Nonetheless, we know, based on our litigation and analysis of voting changes, that states and local jurisdictions are still using discriminatory voting tactics to suppress the political power of minority communities.

Last month, MALDEF, NALEO, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice—AAJC released a new report, *Practice-Based Preclearance: Protecting Against Tactics Persistently Used to Silence Minority Communities’ Votes*, detailing the need for forward-looking voting rights legislation that provides protections for emerging minority populations. During the VRA’s more than 50-year history, all racial and ethnic populations grew, but the growth of communities of color significantly outpaced nonHispanic whites. While there are states and localities where communities of color have traditionally resided in larger numbers, growing communities of historically underrepresented voters are now emerging in new parts of the U.S. Between 2007 and 2014, five of the ten U.S. counties that experienced the most rapid rates of Latino population growth were in North Dakota or South Dakota, two states whose overall Latino populations still account for

less than ten percent of their residents and are dwarfed by Latino communities in states like New Mexico, Texas, and California. It is precisely this rapid growth of different racial or ethnic populations that results in the perception that emerging communities of color are a threat to those in political power.

H.R. 4 includes important protections for these emerging populations in the form of practice-based preclearance, or “known-practices” coverage. Known-practices coverage would focus administrative or judicial review narrowly on suspect practices that are most likely to be tainted by discriminatory intent or to have discriminatory effects, as demonstrated by a broad historical record. This coverage would extend to any jurisdiction in the U.S. that is home to a racially, ethnically, and/or linguistically diverse population and that seeks to adopt a covered practice, despite that practice’s known likelihood of being discriminatory when used in a diverse population. The known practices that would be required to be pre-approved before adopted in a diverse state or political subdivision include: 1) changes in method of election to add or replace a single-member district with an at-large seat to a governing body, 2) certain redistricting plans where there is significant minority population growth in the previous decade, 3) annexations or deannexations that would significantly alter the composition of the jurisdiction’s electorate, 4) certain identification and proof of citizenship requirements, 5) certain polling place closures and realignments, and 6) the withdrawal of multilingual materials and assistance when not matched by the reduction of those services in English. The *Practice-Based Preclearance* report looked at these different types of changes and found, based on two separate analyses of voting discrimination, that these known practices occur with great frequency in the modern era.

Congress must protect access to the polls and pass the VRAA, with known-practice coverage provisions. The VRAA is a critical piece of legislation that will restore voter protections that were lost due to the *Shelby County* decision. We cannot allow another federal election cycle to take place without ensuring that every voter can register and cast a meaningful ballot. MALDEF urges you to stand with all voters and to vote “yes” on H.R. 4.

Sincerely,

ANDREA SENTENO,  
*Regional Counsel.*

SEIU,

*December 4, 2019.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of two million members of the Service Employees International Union (“SEIU”), I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA), which will proceed to the House floor for a vote on final passage this week.

Following the 2013 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby v. Holder*, we have seen a surge of voter suppression tactics by states and localities. These shameful tactics include the enactment of strict voter ID laws, the purge of voters from state voter rolls, and the closure of hundreds of polling places that negatively impacts the ability of people of color, immigrants, young people, and other historically marginalized groups from accessing their constitutional right to vote. In 2016 alone, 14 states passed new laws that restricted access to the ballot for hard working Americans and since then multiple federal courts found intentional racial discrimination in our elections. These unjust actions by states and localities to our electoral system must be addressed with urgency to ensure the voices of working people—Black, white & brown—are heard at the ballot box.

H.R. 4 is an essential piece of legislation that will restore critical civil rights protections for voters while providing clear and consistent voting laws for every state to ensure all eligible citizens can participate in our democracy. The VRAA responds to the wave of biased attacks on our election system since the *Shelby* decision by establishing a “rolling” nationwide trigger mechanism so that only states that have a recent record of racial discrimination in voting would be covered. Under the legislation, these states would have to submit any changes in their voting laws to be precleared before implementation. In addition, the VRAA would grant more power to the federal courts to hold accountable states or jurisdictions whose voting practices have discriminatory results. The VRAA is the dire reform of our electoral system that our nation needs in order to restore this fundamental right and make our democracy more accessible to all people.

Our democracy works best when all eligible voters, no matter their color or how much money they make, can participate in free and fair elections to make their voices heard. We need Congress to restore integrity to our election system. On behalf of our members, we are proud to support this legislation to strengthen our democracy and values as a nation. We will add votes on this legislation, including the motion to recommend, to our legislative scorecard.

Sincerely,

MARY KAY HENRY,  
*International President.*

AFSCME,  
*December 3, 2019.*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
*Washington, DC.*

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), I write in support of the Voting Rights Advancement Act (VRAA, H.R. 4). The VRAA is an important first step to restoring voting rights protections and the Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965.

Signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, the VRA of 1965 was landmark legislation necessary to secure the right to vote for every citizen. It ensured that state and local governments would not deny any American the equal right to vote based on race, color or membership in a minority language group.

The U.S. Supreme Court’s 2013 ruling in *Shelby County, Alabama v. Holder* undermined the VRA, and eliminated the significant requirement for states and localities with a well-documented history of discrimination to “preclear” any new changes to voting practices and procedures. As a result, those with a history of voter disenfranchisement would no longer have to get approval from the Department of Justice or a court to show that their laws do not have a discriminatory purpose or effect. The results have been devastating and pose a significant blow to the protections provided in the VRA. In the wake of the decision, over three dozen state legislatures have enacted new onerous restrictions on voter access. These recent actions include onerous voter ID laws, restrictions on early voting, and excessive purges of voter registration lists, all of which subsequently make voting less accessible, less transparent, more difficult, and challenging for many voters.

H.R. 4 is needed to restore fairness. It establishes a new coverage formula based on repeated voting rights violations over the preceding 25 years of a state’s political subdivisions. It also responds to nationwide discrimination and requires “practice-based preclearance” for known disenfranchisement

strategies that disproportionately target communities of color.

The VRA is one of our nation's most important civil rights laws. It is central to any effort to build a representative democracy where citizens can exercise their most basic right to vote. I strongly urge you to support H.R. 4 when it comes before the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

SCOTT FREY,

Director of Federal Government of Affairs.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS,  
December 6, 2019.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: On behalf of the more than 1.7 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I write in strong support of H.R. 4, the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019.

This important bill is a commonsense approach that responds to the Supreme Court's 2013 decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which struck down a long-standing key provision of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

For nearly 50 years, the Voting Rights Act enshrined the right to free and fair elections in our country. But in 2013, the Supreme Court weakened the "preclearance requirement" of the Voting Rights Act, deeming it no longer justified to address the racial and geographic disparities it sought to remedy when enacted. As a result, laws restricting voting rights throughout the United States surged. In fact, an analysis by the Brennan Center for Justice found that between 2016 and 2018, counties with a history of voter discrimination purged voters from the rolls at much higher rates than other counties. This trend is a direct consequence of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Shelby County v. Holder*.

It is an understatement to say that the Supreme Court's decision ignored the real-life and ongoing efforts to suppress voting rights across our nation. Today, the renewed disenfranchisement tactics of old include, but are not limited to, restrictive voter ID laws, outcome-driven redistricting, limited voting hours and opportunities, and misinformation about polling places and times. And let's be clear, these tactics are all engineered to disproportionately affect the voting rights of African American, Latinx, immigrant and low-income voters, as well as students and seniors.

It is imperative that Congress take new action to ensure the efficacy of the Voting Rights Act. We do not want future generations of students to read in their history lessons that the Supreme Court in 2013 turned the clock back on decades of progress in voting rights and that that was the final word.

Passage of H.R. 4 is a critical step toward fulfilling our aspirations for a stronger democracy, where all voters can exercise their fundamental rights. The long-term damage of not doing so is unacceptable.

To this end, I encourage you to fulfill your civic duty by ensuring all Americans have their most fundamental of civil rights protected by voting YES on H.R. 4.

Thank you for considering our views on this important matter.

Sincerely,

RANDI WEINGARTEN,

President.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF  
JEWISH WOMEN,  
December 4, 2019.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) urges you to vote for the Voting Rights Advancement Act (H.R. 4) when it comes to the floor this week and vote against any Motion to Recommit.

NCJW is a grassroots organization of volunteers and advocates who turn progressive ideals into action. Throughout its history, NCJW has educated and engaged our members and supporters to drive voter turnout and expand voting rights, including advocating for women's suffrage and the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA). This work is in pursuit of *tzedek*, or justice—a core value of Judaism an inspiration for our advocacy. Today, we work for election laws, policies, and practices that ensure easy and equitable access and eliminate obstacles to the electoral process so that every vote counts and can be verified.

H.R. 4 would restore the Voting Rights Act to its former strength. The 2013 *Shelby* decision effectively ended the federal government's ability, granted by the VRA, to preclear changes to state and local election laws before they went into effect. In his decision, Chief Justice Roberts urged Congress to update the formula that determines which jurisdictions need to participate in preclearance. H.R. 4 does exactly that by creating a new coverage formula based on the preceding 25 years.

Voter suppression most harms already marginalized communities. Since *Shelby*, dozens of laws have passed across the country making it easier to suppress the vote. These laws disproportionately impact communities of color, minority-language speakers, low-income voters, elderly and young voters, women, and transgender individuals.

Voting is a fundamental right, protective of all other rights. Congress has the power and responsibility to ensure that every eligible person can cast a ballot by passing H.R. 4.

Sincerely,

JODY RABHAN,

Chief Policy Officer.

PUBLIC CITIZEN,  
December 5, 2019.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE: Tomorrow, the House of Representatives will vote on the Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2019 (H.R. 4). This is an historic moment to cure an historic injustice. Public Citizen strongly urges you to vote for H.R. 4.

The principle of "one person, one vote" is critical to our constitutional democracy—but for too much of our history it was honored in the breach. The passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) is one of the proudest moments in American history, as it affirmed this principle and corrected the shameful denial and suppression of votes to African Americans and other people of color.

Shamefully, however, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Shelby County v. Holder* stripped away Section 5 of the VRA, a cornerstone of the law's protections. Since the *Shelby* ruling, 23 states have enacted laws that disenfranchise individuals and groups by restricting their ability to vote. These sorts of repressive voter suppression tactics are precisely the sort of draconian, discriminatory measures the VRA was enacted to prevent.

It is essential that H.R. 4 be enacted into law to repair the damage done by the *Shelby* decision. This legislation would modernize the VRA and restore protections necessary to prevent racial voter discrimination, voter purges and voter suppression.

The heroes of the civil rights movement fought for the VRA's original passage in 1965 amidst harsh Jim Crow-era disenfranchisement laws and in the face of violent opposition. It is utterly unconscionable that our nation has backtracked on the voting rights progress achieved after passage of the Voting Rights Act. Our country is better than this.

Public Citizen urges in the strongest terms that you to vote in favor of H.R. 4 and oppose

any efforts that could weaken or undermine the legislation.

Sincerely,

ROBERT WEISSMAN,

President.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 741, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 1(c) of rule XIX, further consideration of H.R. 4 is postponed.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING UNITED STATES EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THE ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT THROUGH A NEGOTIATED TWO-STATE SOLUTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the unfinished business is the vote on adoption of the resolution (H. Res. 326) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding United States efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a negotiated two-state solution, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the adoption of the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 226, nays 188, answered "present" 2, not voting 14, as follows:

[Roll No. 652]  
YEAS—226

Adams	Correa	Garcia (TX)
Aguilar	Costa	Golden
Allred	Courtney	Gomez
Axne	Cox (CA)	Gonzalez (TX)
Barragan	Craig	Gottheimer
Beatty	Crist	Green, Al (TX)
Bera	Crow	Grijalva
Beyer	Cuellar	Haaland
Bishop (GA)	Cunningham	Harder (CA)
Blumenauer	Dauids (KS)	Hastings
Blunt Rochester	Davis (CA)	Hayes
Bonamici	Davis, Danny K.	Heck
Boyle, Brendan	Dean	Higgins (NY)
F.	DeFazio	Himes
Brindisi	DeGette	Horn, Kendra S.
Brown (MD)	DeLauro	Horsford
Brownley (CA)	DelBene	Houlahan
Bustos	Delgado	Hoyer
Butterfield	Demings	Huffman
Carbajal	DeSaulnier	Jackson Lee
Cárdenas	Deutch	Jayapal
Carson (IN)	Dingell	Jeffries
Case	Doggett	Johnson (GA)
Casten (IL)	Doyle, Michael	Johnson (TX)
Castor (FL)	F.	Kaptur
Castro (TX)	Engel	Keating
Chu, Judy	Escobar	Kelly (IL)
Cicilline	Eshoo	Kennedy
Cisneros	Español	Khanna
Clark (MA)	Evans	Kildee
Clarke (NY)	Finkenauer	Kim
Clay	Fletcher	Kim
Cleaver	Foster	Kind
Clyburn	Frankel	Kirkpatrick
Cohen	Fudge	Krishnamoorthi
Connolly	Gallego	Kuster (NH)
Cooper	Garamendi	Lamb